

A SEARCH FOR

QUETZALCÓATL



by

John Spencer Carroll

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I dedicate this book to Veronica Alice Yada,
who has assisted me beyond measure.

INTRODUCTION

I became curious about Quetzalcóatl when I was in México approximately 25 years ago - not Quetzalcóatl the god of the wind, not the god of the city of Cholula or of the merchants but Quetzalcóatl the man. From asking about him, I learned that he is controversial and that the conquered and the conquerers in México five centuries ago disagreed even then when they wrote about him.

He arrived by ship in Yucatán in 986 or 987 A.D. So two Maya sources say, dating this event in a *katun* 4-Ahua in the Maya calendar. He left Yucatán in 1002 after building a ship and sailed westerly and northerly along the Gulf of México to Pánuco. He migrated from there to Tulancingo (Tulantzinco), where he remained for four years and was a teacher of religion. He then moved to Cholulan, where he stayed for 20 years. In 1029, he became the priest-king of Tulan. In 1051, his opponents forced him to leave Tulan in disarray. Two years later, in 1053, he died near the mouth of the Coatzacoalco River, either by burning himself or having himself burned in a fiery cremation ship that his followers called a *coatlapechtli* - a serpent raft.

The peoples of México remember him as a bearded white man.

The only Europeans who were crossing the Atlantic Ocean in 986 were Icelanders.

One such Icelander who sailed westerly and southwesterly from Iceland in 986 was Björn Ásbrandsson, known as Björn the Breidavík Champion. No one in Iceland heard about him again until 1031 when a lost Icelandic merchant-sailor encountered him in a large land.

The epilogue is at the end. Read the book first, then read the epilogue. You will be able to decide for yourself whether this search for Quetzalcóatl has been successful.

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Chapter I. CORTÉS AND QUETZALCÓATL

All iron was their war array. In iron they clothed themselves. With iron they covered their heads. Iron were their swords. Iron were their crossbows. Iron were their lances ... They were very white; they had chalky faces; they had yellow hair though the hair of some was black. Long were their beards ... Bernandino de Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*.

Red were the beards of the children of the sun, the bearded ones from east, when they arrived here in our land.- *Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel*.

Hernán Cortés, an adventurer, an opportunist, boldly decided to seize the golden treasures of Mexico from Motecuhzoma, the angry lord, the first speaker, ¹ whose authority extended throughout most of the land, an emperor, victorious in war. These two cruel men contemplated each other from a distance, the one, Cortés, on the gulf coast, with gun powder, arquebuses, cannons, crossbows, cavalry, lances, steel swords, and a lust for gold but only a few hundred infantrymen, and the other, Motecuhzoma, in Tenochtitlán on an island in the Lake of México high amid the mountains, with spears, spear throwers, bows, arrows, and stone-edged swords, with several hundred thousand combatants, a knowledge of the terrain. control of the food supply, and plenty of gold, each trying to outwit the other, each brave, yet secretly afraid.

Motecuhzoma's morale was low; ill omens ² had beset him and his empire. Comets, always thought to augur evil, shone in the sky. The temple of Huitzilopochtli burned, and lightning struck the temple of Xiuhtecuhtli. A violent windstorm lashed the Lake of México. Grotesque monsters appeared and disappeared. A woman weeping in the night, apparently the goddess Cihuacoatl, cried, "Oh, my sons, we are lost! Oh, my sons, where can I hide you? My children, we must flee far away from this city! My children, where shall I take you?" In Tlaxcala, a whirlwind of dust repeatedly rose like a sleeve from the mountain then called Matlalcueye and now called La Malinche. All of these signs bode misfortune for Motecuhzoma and his domain. The royal soothsayers who dared to confirm the approaching disaster somehow managed to escape Motecuhzoma's wrath, but Motecuhzoma summarily ordered their wives and children to be killed. ³

At this apex of Motecuhzoma's anxiety, the ship of Juan de

Grijalva appeared along the gulf coast. A commoner, who resided at Mictlancuauhtla, brought the news that he had seen "a mountain range or large hill floating in the midst of the sea." ⁴ Alarmed, Motecuhzoma jailed the wretch for his gall but dispatched the trusted Cuitlalpitoc and Teuctlamacazqui to Cuertlaxtlán to investigate. Attended by the governor of Cuertlaxtlán, whose name was Pinotl, Cuitlalpitoc and Teuctlamacazqui saw "two towers or small hills moving along on top of the sea." ⁵ Hastily they abandoned Pinotl, rushed back to Tenochtitlán, and reported to Motecuhzoma that they had seen strange people in these floating towers or hills, people who had white skins and huge beards.

Hearing this news, Motecuhzoma was downcast, and he said nothing.⁶ Regaining his composure, Motecuhzoma ordered gifts to be carried to Quetzalcóatl, but Grijalva sailed away before the ambassadors and porters arrived at the coast. Not wishing to be caught again unprepared, Motecuhzoma commanded sentinels to keep watch at Nauhtla, Tuxtlan, Mictlancuauhtla, and elsewhere along the Gulf of México. Again floating towers appeared, but this time they were the fleet of Cortés. Motecuhzoma was even more certain that the strangers were Quetzalcóatl and his retinue because this time they were arriving in the Nahua year *ce acatl*, the year 1-Reed, a date predicted for Quetzalcóatl's return. Again Motecuhzoma sent ambassadors, Cuitlalpitoc and Teuhtlilli, who also were spies, to meet the strangers, to present gifts to them, and to determine whether their leader was the awaited Quetzalcóatl.

Cuitlalpitoc and Teuhtlilli traveled back and forth between the coast and Tenochtitlán, reporting to Motecuhzoma and conveying his messages to Cortés. Some of Motecuhzoma's advisers advocated war against the strangers, some recommended submission to fate. Motecuhzoma vacillated and compromised; he sent lavish gifts of gold and other objects to the strangers but urged them to return whence they came. To encourage the bearded ones to adopt this solution, Motecuhzoma eventually recalled Cuitlalpitoc and Teuhtlilli and quit supplying food to the Spaniards.

His greed whetted by the golden bribes of Motecuhzoma, Cortés burned his ships and started the long march to Tenochtitlán. The date was August 16, 1519. The Totonacas of Cempoalla, heartened by the promises of Cortés, joined the Castilians. Slowly the Spanish and Totonaca armies ascended from the humid, mosquito-ridden coast, the Totonacas pushing and pulling the cannons and carrying the baggage. At the end of the second day they reached Jalapa. Still climbing, they passed through Xicochimalco, Teoixhuacán, Nauhcampatépetl, Xocotlán, and Ixtacamaxtitlán, meeting no opposition. On August 31, 1519, the armies crossed the frontier of the republic of Tlaxcala, a

martial nation which had managed to preserve its independence even though surrounded by Motecuhzoma's vassals. After three days of bloody combat against the Tlaxcaltecas and their Otomi auxiliaries, the exhausted Spaniards triumphed; shrewdly, Cortés then offered peace. The Tlaxcaltecas, belatedly recognizing the benefit of having a formidable ally to aid them against the Aztecas, accepted the alliance and loyally succored the Spaniards until the ultimate destruction of Tenochtitlán.

By this time, the Spaniards realized that they were gods in the eyes of many Nahuas, who referred to them as *teotl* the Nahuatl word meaning "god," corrupted into *teule* by Bernal Díaz del Castillo. ⁷ Their deification notwithstanding, the Castilians still had to prove their mettle by fighting at Tlaxcala. Neither Cortés in his *relaciones* to the king nor Díaz de Castillo in his *Historia verdadera* mentioned Quetzalcóatl by name; but Malintzin, ⁸ the interpreter, eventually told or translated the legend of Quetzalcóatl to Cortés. The Spanish adventurers learned that the Nahuas of México were awaiting the appearance of gods from the east and that many Nahuas thought that they, the Spaniards, were those gods.

Next the Spaniards and their Totonaca and Tlaxcalteca allies moved from Tlaxcala south to Cholula, anciently one of the capitals of Quetzalcóatl. The people of Cholula received the newcomers "in a festive manner," but Cortés learned that they were planning to ambush and annihilate his Castilians, Totonacas, and Tlaxcaltecas. Assembling the Cholultecas in a courtyard, Cortes closed the entrances.

...the Spaniards commenced to lance them and to kill as many as they could ... The Cholultecas carried neither offensive nor defensive weapons. They went unarmed, thinking that which was done would not be done. In this manner they died a bad death. ⁹

Thus the Castilians subdued Cholula. The Cholultecas had believed that Quetzalcóatl would drown their enemies by causing water to gush from the pyramid dedicated to him, but this assumption proved to be false. ¹⁰

The Spaniards heard some details of the Quetzalcóatl legend in Cholula; ¹¹

The greatest idol of their gods they call Quetzalcóatl, god of the air, who was the founder of the city, a virgin, as they say, and of the greatest penance, institutor of fasting, of withdrawing blood from the tongue and ears, and to whom they did not sacrifice

except quails, doves, and things of the hunt. He never dressed otherwise than in a robe of white cotton, narrow and long, over it a cloak strewn with reddish crosses.

The Totonacas returned to their coastal homeland, but the Castilians and Tlaxcaltecas moved inexorably toward Tenochtitlán, crossing the chilly pass between the volcano of Popocatepetl and the mountain of Iztaccihuatl and descending into the Valley of México. As the Spanish and Tlaxcalteca armies proceeded along the causeway leading to Tenochtitlan, the Aztecas met Cortes at Xoloc. Plainly, Motecuhzoma was worried. He knew that the awesome strangers had vanquished both Tlaxcala and Cholula and that the Tlaxcaltecas, his enemies, now served the strangers as allies. He realized that the Tlaxcaltecas had not praised his virtues. And he knew that the leader of the strangers was either Quetzalcóatl or Quetzalcóatl's descendant or Quetzalcóatl's ambassador - he knew not which, but whichever it was, he had a returning god on his hands. He wished that the god would benignly go away. Prudently, he sought to mitigate the wrath of the god by words of exculpation.

First, he said, the strangers should not believe what they had heard about him, Motecuhzoma, and he, Motecuhzoma, should not believe the reports he had received about the strangers. ¹² Second, he, Motecuhzoma, was not claiming to be a god and was not usurping the prerogatives of Quetzalcóatl; in fact, he had been acting as Quetzalcóatl's deputy all along, awaiting the happy moment of Quetzalcóatl's arrival. Third, he, Motecuhzoma, was not as rich as his vassals said he was, but he would share what he had. Fourth, the strangers must be tired, they were welcome, and they should rest. And then he added: ¹³

... we do not need your persuasion in order to believe that the great prince whom you obey is a descendant of our ancient Quetzalcóatl. By a prophecy of his, which we venerate as infallible truth, and by the tradition of the centuries which is conserved in our annals, we know that he left these regions to conquer new lands toward the part of east and he promised that [with] passing time his descendants would come to moderate our laws or to straighten out our government. And because the signs which you bring conform with this prediction and the prince of the east who sent you [and because] the grandeur of such an illustrious progenitor shows in your own exploits, we have already determined that all our power reaches be done in your honor.

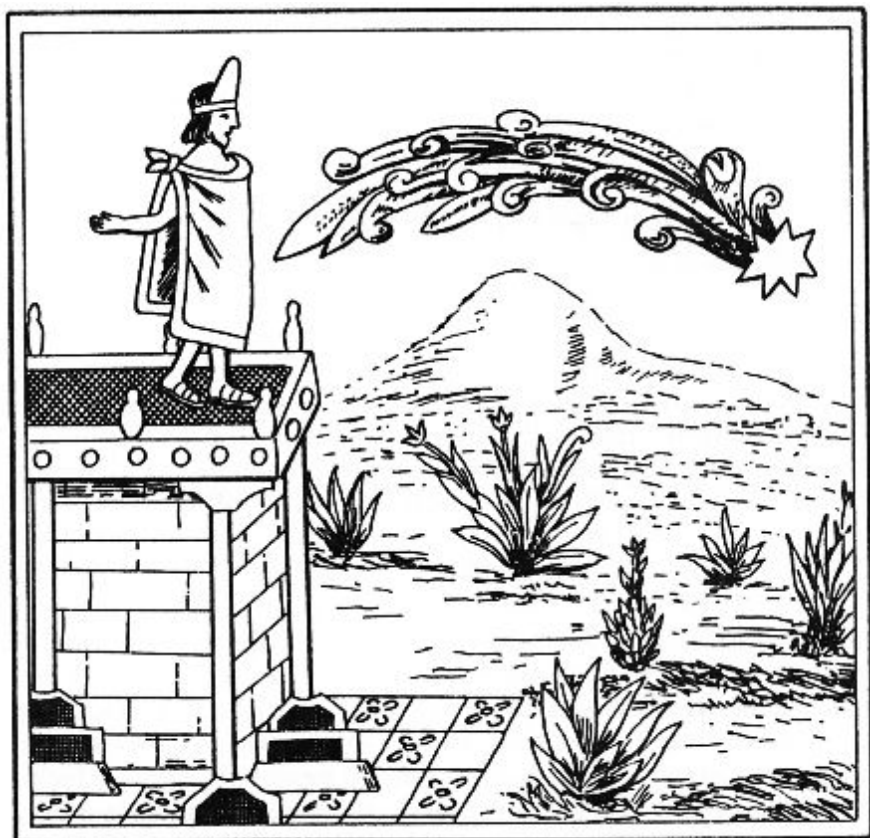
Cortés was equal to the occasion. He thanked Motecuhzoma for his kindness and offered him "respect and veneration that corresponds to your grandeur." The Spaniards, he said, were able "to discern the color of words and through them the appearance of the heart," and they had not believed either Motecuhzoma's rebels or his flatterers. "I come," Cortés announced, "to visit you as the ambassador of the most powerful monarch under the sun since his birth, in whose name I propose to you that he wishes to be your friend and confederate." Then Cortés launched himself into a sermon about the advantages of Christianity, urging Motecuhzoma and his attendants not to worship "those abominable idols." Not wanting to annoy any gods whatever, Motecuhzoma listened patiently and then responded cautiously: ¹⁴

I accept with all gratitude the confederation and friendship which you propose to me from the great descendant of Quetzalcóatl; but all the gods are good, and yours can be all that you say, without offense to mine. Rest now, for you are in your house, where you will be attended with all the care that is due to your importance and to the prince who sent you.

With tears in his eyes, Motecuhzoma had accepted his fate. ¹⁵

Within a few days, Cortés seized Motecuhzoma and held him captive; Motecuhzoma succumbed utterly, not to Cortés but to Quetzalcóatl. As the instrument of Quetzalcóatl's will, Motecuhzoma became a puppet controlled by the strings of Cortés, executing the orders of Quetzalcóatl-Cortés yet hoping that Quetzalcóatl-Cortés would eventually leave. When the people of Tenochtitlan finally rose against Spanish cruelty, Motecuhzoma sided with the Spaniards. Spanish historians wrote that Motecuhzoma died from the blow of a stone thrown by an Azteca when he, Motecuhzoma, was exhorting his subjects to lay down their arms and to quit fighting the Castilians; Nahua historians maintained that Spaniards stabbed him to death. After the demise of Motecuhzoma, the Aztecas of Tenochtitlán expelled the Spaniards; but later the Castilians returned, more numerous and better equipped. One by one, tributaries deserted the Aztecas; the Spaniards and their allies surrounded Tenochtitlan and methodically starved and battled the remnants of the defenders into shattering defeat.

Spain's colonial rule of México had begun. The date was August 13, 1521.



OMEN IN THE SKY

A troubled Motecuhzoma watches a comet from his palace in Tenochtitlán. (From *Codex Florentine*, Séjourné. 1962:8)



Map of Yucatán

Chapter II. QUETZALCÓATL-KUKULCÁN IN YUCATÁN

**Three times it was, they say, that the foreigners arrived.-
*Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel.***

Among the Mayas of Yucatán, a 7200-day time span known as *katun* 4-Ahau was nearing its end. The date, as measured by the Gregorian calendar, was either 986 or 987 A.D.- probably it was 987 A.D. but before November 25. ¹⁶

Twenty men disembarked ¹⁷ at Champotón on the western coast of Yucatán. ¹⁸ Their vessel was a sailing ship; ¹⁹ perhaps it resembled a feathered serpent. The leader of this group was a man called Kukulcán. These men had a strange appearance; they "wore long clothes" and "sandals as footwear," had "large beards," and had "no hats on their heads." ²⁰

At this time in history, Yucatán was in turmoil. Invaders from México or Tabasco, known to the Mayas as the Itzás, had descended on the Mayas in 970 A.D., bringing destruction and death. Somehow, by luck, persuasion, or guile, Kukulcán managed to install himself as ruler of the Itzás, possibly because they thought he was a god.

Initially Kukulcán moved inland from Champotón toward the east and reigned at Chichén Itzá. The Itzás had caused many of the lords of the land to be killed, and Kukulcán calmed the dissension which their deaths had caused. ²¹ He ordered confessions and fasting, ²² and he himself was celibate. ²³ His power became so formidable that Quiché-Cakchiquel princes from the highlands of Guatemala journeyed to seek and receive investiture by him.

He abandoned Chichén Itzá and founded a new capital named Mayapán. ²⁴ Chichén Itzá means "well of the Itza" in the Yucatec Maya language, but Mayapán signifies "banner of the Maya," being derived from the Maya word *Maya* and the Náhuatl word *pantli*. The new settlement and its name symbolized a shift in Kukulcán's policy. Before the foundation of Mayapán, Kukul can ruled only the Náhuatl-speaking Itzá intruders, but at Mayapán he became king of all the factions in Yucatán. By choosing the name Mayapán, he conciliated both the indigenous Mayas and the foreign Itzás. By negotiations, he induced the surviving lords of the land to settle at Mayapán, and he divided the land among them, apportioning settlements "to each one according to the antiquity of his lineage and the worth of this person.

25 He awarded 22 settlements to the Cocom family. 26 So that he could keep the lords subjected to his surveillance, he built a wall around the center of Mayapán, leaving only two narrow gates, and required the lords to live within the wall. 27

Kukulcán lived with the lords of the land at Mayapán for some years "in much peace and friendship." 28 In 1002 A.D., 29 he left Mayapán and returned to Champotón. 30 There he built a ship 31 and sailed west and north along the coast of México to the mouth of the Panuco River. 32 The Cocom then established themselves as the rulers of Mayapán and its tributaries. 33 The League of Mayapán, created by Kukulcán and perpetuated by the Cocom family, endured almost five centuries and disintegrated finally in 1441 A.D. or 1446 A.D. 34

In Tula, Cholula, and elsewhere in México, Kukulcán was known as Quetzalcóatl. Kukulcán means "feathered serpent" in Yucatec Maya, and Quetzalcóatl means "feathered serpent" in Náhuatl. Diego de Landa in 1566 stated positively that Kukulcán and Quetzalcóatl were the same man; 35 Juan de Torquemada, a priest, agreed in 1615. 36 By employing both the names Kukulcán and Quetzalcóatl in parallel contexts, the Spanish officials who wrote the *Relaciones de Yucatán* confirmed Landa's identification. 37

The most informative writer was Diego de Landa, who penned his *Relación de las cosas de Yucatán* in 1566. He elicited his facts from learned Maya informants, Juan Nachi Cocom and others. Landa wrote; 38

It is a belief among the Indians that with the Yzaes [Itzás] who settled Chichenizá [Chichén Itzá] there reigned a great lord named Cuculcan and that the principal building, which is called Cuculcán, shows this to be true. 39

They say that he entered from the west but they differ among themselves whether he came before or after the Yzaes or with them. They say that he was well-disposed and had neither wife nor children and that after his return he was regarded in México as one of their gods called Cezalcuati [Quetzalcóatl]. In Yucatán also, they considered him a god on account of his being a great statesman [*republicano*]. This was seen in the seat [of government] which he established in Yucatán after the death of the lords [of Yucatán] in order to calm the dissension which their deaths had caused in the land.

This Cuculcán returned to settle another city, negotiating with the native lords of the land so that he and they came [to the city]; and for this purpose, they chose a very good seat [of government] six leagues further inland than where Merida now is and fifteen or sixteen leagues from the sea.

They surrounded it with a very broad wall of dry stone

[that is, without mortar] approximately one eighth of a league (in circumference]. leaving only two narrow gates. The wall was not high.

In the middle of this enclosure, they built their temples, and the largest, which is like that of Chichenizá, they called Cuculcán. They built another one round with four doors, different from the many others that are in that land, and [built] others roundabout, some joined together with others. Inside this enclosure, they built houses for the lords, among whom they divided the land, giving settlements to each one according to the antiquity of his lineage and the worth of his person.

And Cuculcán gave a name to the city, not his, as the Ahizaes [Ah Itzás] did in Chichenizá, which means "well of the Ahizaes." Instead, he called it Mayapán, which means "the banner of the Maya," because they call the language of the land *Maya*. The Indians call [the city] Ychpá [Ichpaa], which means "inside the enclosure."

This Cuculcán lived with the lords for some years in that city; and leaving them in much peace and friendship, he returned by the same route to México. On the way he stopped in Champotón; and in memory of himself and of his departure, he built in the sea a good building like that of Chichenizá, a long stone' throw from the shore. And thus Cuculcán left an everlasting memory in Yucatán.

Cuculcán [having] departed, the lords agreed, in order that the republic would endure, that the house of Cocom would have the principal command for [the reason of its] being the oldest and richest and for [the reason] he who then governed being [the] man of the most valor ...

The going of Cuculcán has been told, after which there were among the Indians some who said he had gone to the sky with the gods, and for that [reason] they regarded him as a god...

António de Herrera y Tordesillas [40](#) echoed Landa's account in 1601-1615.

In 1546, Francisco Hernández, the priest in Yucatán, not the physician in México, wrote a letter to Bartolomé de las Casas, bishop of Chiapas. Astounded by Hernández' report, Las Casas summarized it in his *Apologética historia de las Indias*: [41](#)

I will refer to another thing, new enough in all the Indias, which today in no part of them has been found, and this is that

since that kingdom [of Yucatán] itself also extends, by proximity, within the limits of my bishopric of Chiapa, I went there to disembark on land and [at a] very healthy port [Campeche]. I found there a good, honest priest of mature years [Francisco Hernández], who knew the language of the Indians by having lived in it [the kingdom of Yucatán] some years; and because it was necessary for me to go onward to the head of my bishopric, I constituted him as my vicar ... and charged him to travel inland visiting the Indians and to preach to them ...

At the end of certain months and I even believe that [it was at the end] of one year, he wrote me that he had found an important lord ... [Being] asked how he had information about [the past], he [the important lord] responded that the lords taught it to their sons and thus it descended from hand to hand.

[He] affirmed ... that anciently twenty men came to that land. He marked the names of fifteen which because it is bad handwriting and because it is not important here I do not put down. Of the other five, the priest says that he found no trace. The chief of them was called Cocolcán [Kukulcán], and this one they called god of fevers and temperatures.

Two of the others [they called gods] of the fish. Two others [they called gods] of farms or landed estates. Another [was the god] that thunders, etc. They wore long clothes, sandals as footwear [and] large beards and no hats on their heads. They ordered the people to confess and fast ...

All the above said that father priest called Francisco Hernández wrote me ...

In 1688, Diego López de Cogolludo wrote that Las Casas arrived at Campeche in Yucatán on January 6, 1545. ⁴² Francisco Hernández was in Yucatán before the end of the conquest as a chaplain in the company of Francisco de Montejo the younger, and he was the first European to record the legend of Kukulcán among the Yucatec Mayas.

Hernández' letter established some curious facts. Kukulcán, having only 19 men with him, was not a conqueror who organized and led a massive invasion. Kukulcán demanded confessions and fasting. Whereas the Yucatec Mayas and the peoples of México are virtually beardless, Kukulcán and his followers had large beards, like Europeans.

In the late sixteenth century, several other Spaniards sketchily noted the Yucatec Maya legend of Kukulcán. The king of Spain had dispatched a questionnaire to the Spanish officialdom, the *real cédula*

of May 29, 1577, ⁴³ commanding reports from them; the Spaniards in Yucatán complied. These reports, originally filed in the Archivo General de Indias in Sevilla, are collectively known as the *Relaciones de Yucatán* and are in Volumes 11 and 13 of the *Colección de documentos inéditos relativos al descubrimiento, conquista y organización de las antiguas posesiones españolas de ultramar*, second series, published in 1898 and 1900 by the Real Academia de la Historia in Madrid. Most of these *Relaciones* bear dates in the early months of 1581. Unlike Landa and Herrera y Tordesillas, the authors of these *Relaciones* were not scholars writing for erudition or pleasure; they were merely officials submitting reports.

Two of the report writers were Francisco de Bracamonte and Martin de Palomar. Bracamonte was *encomendera* ⁴⁴ and Palomar was *rigidor* ⁴⁵ of the settlements of Motul and Tecax that were within Bracamonte's *encomienda*. Palomar wrote the *relación* on behalf of Bracamonte, and his Yucatec Maya informants were Juan Peche, governor of Motul, Juan Qui, Domingo Xul, and Francisco Evan [Euan], *principales* ⁴⁶ of Motul, and Juan Cumci de Landa, citizen of Motul, who might have been a protégé of Diego de Landa. In the Yucatán politics of the age, the Peche family supported the Xiu family and opposed the Cocom family. ⁴⁷ Referring to the people of Motul, Palomar wrote: ⁴⁸

... they had knowledge of only one God who created heaven and earth and everything, and [they knew] that his seat [of government] was in heaven. They were [at] one time with knowledge of this only God, to whom they had erected [a] temple with priests, to which [priests] they brought presents and alms so that they had this manner of worship until a great lord, called Rurulcan [Kukulcán], came from outside this land with people, for he and his people worshipped idols; and from here those of the land commenced to worship idols...

Pedro de Santillana was *encomendero* of Moxopipe. Gaspar António, who was Gaspar António Xiu, also known as Gaspar António Chi de Herrera, a member of the Xiu family, assisted Santillana in preparing his *relación*. Gaspar António Xiu (1531-1610?) was an interpreter for the Spanish government of Yucatán; he became a Christian convert at the age of 15. In the "Relación de Quinacama ó Moxopipe," Santillana and Xiu narrated: ⁴⁹

The ancient ones of this province say that anciently, around eight hundred years ago, they did not worship idols in this land.

After the Mexicans entered it and possessed it, a captain who was called Quetzalquat [Quetzalcóatl] in the Mexican language (that is to say in our [language], plumage of a snake, and among themselves they give this name to the serpent because they say that it has plumage) introduced idolatry and the use of idols as gods in this land, which [idols] he made them make from wood, clay, and stone. He made [them] worship them, and they offered them many things of the hunt and merchandise and above all blood from their noses and ears and the hearts of some whom they sacrificed in their service. They perfumed them with smokes of *copal*, which is the incense of this land; and this custom remained until the *conquistadores* conquered them.

Four other *encomenderos* mentioned Kukulcán in 1581: (1) Juan de la Cueva Santillán, who described himself as a resident of the city of Mérida and as "*encomendero* in it"; (2) Cristóbal Sánchez, *encomendero* of the settlements of Tecaúto and Tepacán but resident of Mérida; (3) Juan de Paredes, *encomendero* of Sitipeche and Bolonpoche but likewise a citizen of Mérida; and (4) Yñigo Nieto, *encomendero* of Quitelcam but inhabitant of Mérida. All four of these *Relaciones* offer substantially the same comment:

Cueva Santillán: 50

It is said that the first settlers of Chichén Iza [Chichén Itzá] were not idolators until Rukalcan [Kukulcán], a Mexican captain, entered these provinces...

Sánchez: 51

It is said that the first settlers of Chichényza [Chichén Itzá] were not idolators until Rul Ralcan [Kukulcán], a Mexican captain, entered these parts. He taught idolatry ...

Paredes: 52

It is said that the first settlers of Chihinisa [Chichén Itzá] were not idolators until Rul Rau [Kukulcán], a Mexican captain, entered these parts. He taught idolatry ...

Nieto: 53

It is said that the first settlers of Chichenisa [Chichén Itzá] were not idolators until Rul Ran [Kukucan], a Mexican captain, entered these parts. He taught idolatry ...

The similarity of these passages leads to the conclusion that the worthy *encomenderos* either copied from each other or had the same informant. Nieto confessed that Gaspar António, an Indian native of the settlement of Maní, who was grammarian [interpreter] of the royal crown, fluent in the Castilian language, and resident of this city of Mérida, helped him to make this *relación*, [54](#) and thus Gaspar António Xiu was the source not only of the information provided by Santillána and Nieto, as candidly admitted by them, but also of the statements made by Cueva Santillán, Sánchez, and Paredes.

As a member of the Xiu family, Gaspar António Xiu [55](#) hated the Cocom family. After the departure of Kukulcán in 1002 A.D., the Cocoms had gained power at Mayapán. These Cocoms were Itzás; they came to Yucatán from México or Tabasco. Tradition in Yucatán associated them with Kukulcán. The Xius migrated from Chiapas and settled near Mayapán, perhaps in 1007 A.D., and recognized the authority of the Cocoms. Later the Cocoms became oppressive and imported soldiers from Tabasco and Xicalango. In 1441 or 1446, the Xius rebelled and killed the Cocom ruler and all of his sons except one who was away on a trip to the Ulúa River in Belize. This Cocom who escaped death was a great-grandfather of Juan Nachi Cocom, a Maya lord who was an informant of Diego de Landa. Both victors and vanquished abandoned Mayapán, the Xius founding a new community named Mani and the Cocoms establishing a settlement called Tibolon. [56](#)

In 1536, the Xius desired to make a pilgrimage to Chichén Itzá to make sacrifices as a means of abating a famine and asked the Cocoms for permission to pass through Cocom territory via Uxmal. Juan Nachi Cocom and the other Cocoms deceived the Xius, bade them welcome, gave them lodging, and then burned the house where they slept, killing all who escaped the flames. Napuc Xiu, father of Gaspar António Xiu, died thus at Uxmal by the hands of the Cocoms. [57](#)

For those reasons, Gaspar António Xiu was biased. A Christian convert, he knew that the Spaniards abhorred idolatry, and he seized the opportunity to blame the idolatry on the Mexicans, the Cocoms. The Itzá-Cocom invaders of Yucatán presumably did bring their idols with them from México or Tabasco. But in his desire to blame all idolatry on the Cocoms, Xiu thus accused Kukulcán, a foreigner, who appeared in Yucatán after the Cocoms and who established himself as ruler of the Cocoms and others at Mayapán. Members of the anti-

Cocom Xiu and anti-Cocom Peche families are the only known Maya sources for the assertion that Kukulcán himself personally introduced idolatry into Yucatán.

Before the Spanish conquest in the sixteenth century, only a few Yucatec Mayas could read and write. These literate Mayas were priests and nobles, and they used glyphs to write in books made from bark and deerskin. As a result of book-burning by the missionaries, who thought they were incinerating works of the devil, and the ravages of time, only four Maya manuscripts in glyphs are still extant.

Some Mayas wished to preserve their traditions against the onslaught of Spanish culture; and having learned Spanish, they transcribed some of their *códices* onto European paper using the Spanish script as adapted by the missionaries for the Yucatec Maya language. Copyists were also editors, and from generation to generation textual changes occurred. Chumayel, Tizimín, Kaúa, Teabo, Ixil, Tekax, Tusik, Oxkutzcab, Maní, and Calkini produced books in Yucatec Maya, now called "books of Chilam Balam" by archaeologists and historians. Most of these books have never been translated into Spanish, English, or any other European language, and most of them have never been published in any form.

A key passage in the *Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel* tells about Kukulcán; 58 in English it is: 59

First: *Katun* 4-Ahau is the eleventh *katun* by the count. At Chichén Itzá is established the *katun*. Come and reside the Itzá's. Comes the successor. Comes the ancestor. Comes Sir Kentenal. Comes blood vomit. Comes Kukulcán after 60 them for the second time. This [is] the word of God. Come the Itzá's.

This passage suggests five facts:

- (1) The Maya date of Kukulcán's arrival was a *katun* 4-Ahau.
- (2) The Mayas erected the *katun* stone inaugurating this *katun* at Chichén Itzá.
- (3) During this *katun*, Itzá's arrived and settled.
- (4) Sir Kentenal, whoever he was, came.
- (5) During this *katun*, a disease ("blood vomit") afflicted the Maya, an epidemic perhaps introduced by foreign invaders. This assertion lends some credence to Francisco Hernández' statement that Kukulcán was a god of fevers.

Another Maya source is the *Book of Chilam Balam of Tizimín*, 61 compiled around 1750 A.D. This manuscript reposes in the Museo Nacional de Antropología é Historia in México City, but a copy made

by Carl Hermann Berendt in 1872 is in the custody of the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, and other copies are in the Peabody Museum at Harvard University and the Latin American Library at Tulane University. One of its passages resembles the paragraph quoted from the *Book of Chilham Balam of Chumayel* and apparently stems from the same Maya source, an *u kahlay katunob* [62](#) that escaped incineration by the missionaries. As transcribed from the copy [63](#) in the Peabody Museum [64](#) at Harvard University, this passage as translated reads:

Four Ahau is the eleventh *katun* by the count. At Chichén Itzá is established the *katun*. Comes the successor. Comes the ancestor. Comes, comes Sir Kentenal. Comes blood vomit for four folds [of the *katun*]. Comes Kukulcán after the Itzá for the fourth time. [It is] the word of the *katun*. *Uale*.

A comparison of these Chumayel and Tizimín texts discloses that they are almost identical. The phrases *tu pach* and *tu pachob* in the Chumayel manuscript and *tu pach* in the Tizimín document show that Kukulcán came after the Itzás, both of these expressions meaning "after" or "behind." The only substantial difference between these two Maya sources is that the *Chumayel* says Kukulcán came for the second time and the *Tizimín* states that he came for the fourth time. In Yucatec Maya, *ca* is "two," and *can* is "four." The meaning would be changed if a copyist either added an *n* to the word *ca* or omitted an *n* from the word *can*.

What, then, is the significance of these two paragraphs? They import that Kukulcán came after the Itzás when the Itzás came for the second time. The evidence supports the belief that two traumatic invasions afflicted the Mayas of Yucatán before the Spanish conquest - "Comes the successor. Comes the ancestor"- these onslaughts being known as the Small Descent and the Great Descent. As narrated by Bernardo de Lizana [65](#) in 1633, the foreigners in the Small Descent arrived from the east, and the enemies in the Great Descent came from the west. Kukulcán arrived in 986 or 987 after the second invasion, which was the Great Descent. The date when the Great Descent occurred at Chichén Itzá is April 26, 970 A.D. [66](#) Yet a source from México supports another interpretation of the phrase "for the second time."

The *Codex Telleriano-Remensis* [67](#) is in the Bibliothèque National in Paris. In 1700, this Nahuatl document appeared in the possession of the archbishop of Reims, Charles Maurice le Tellier. At a date before 1562, some commentator wrote annotations explaining the pictures in

the manuscript. One of these annotations states: "... Quecalcoatle of Tula...is he who took the name of the first Quecalcoatle, and now they call him One Reed, which is the star Venus." ⁶⁸ Therefore, if the anonymous annotator of the *Codex Telleriano-Remensis* was correct, an earlier Kukulcán-Quetzalcóatl existed, and if so the *Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel* when it says that Kukulcán came for the second time" means that another Kukulcán-Quetzalcóatl had come at a previous time.

Kukulcán gained eminence in Yucatán, and his fame spread to the highlands of Guatemala.

Two peoples who still live in the mountains of Guatemala, the Quichés and the Cakchiquels, recorded in their histories that their ancient kings journeyed far to receive investiture from Lord Nacxit - Nacxit being another name for Kukulcán.

One of these histories is the *Popul Vuh*, written in the Quiché tongue at Chichicastenango in Guatemala during the years 1554-1558 and copied by Francisco Ximénez (1666-1723) in the early eighteenth century. This chronicle tells that the ancestors of the Quichés (probably meaning only the ancestors of the rulers) migrated from Tulan to Quauhtlemallan (Guatemala) and that the second generation felt obliged to petition Nacxit (Kukulcán) to bestow regal authority on them: ⁶⁹

Then they decided to go the the east, thinking thus to fulfill the command of their fathers, which they had not forgotten. It had been a long time since their fathers had died ...

And starting on their journey, they said: "We are going to the east, there whence came our fathers." So they said when the three sons set out. One was called Qocaib, and he was the son of Balam-Quitze of the Cavec [tribe]. The one called Qoacutec was son of Balam-Acab of the Nihai [tribe]; and the other called Qoahau was son of Mahucutan of the Ahau-Quiché [tribe]...

Certainly they crossed the sea when they came there to the east, when they went to receive the investiture of the kingdom. When they arrived before Lord Nacxit, which was the name of the great lord, the only supreme judge of all the kingdoms, he gave them the insignia of the kingdom and all its distinctive symbols...

Then, [they] having arrived [back] at their settlement called Hacavitz, ⁷⁰ all the people of Tamub ⁷¹ and Ilocab ⁷² assembled there; all the tribes were.. .filled with joy when Qocaib, Qoacutec, and Qoahau arrived, and there they again assumed the rule of the tribes.

Another Quiché document is the *Titulo de los señores de Totonicapán*. In 1834, the residents of Totonicapán in Guatemala asked the provincial governor to obtain the services of Dionisio José Chonay, priest of Sacapulas, to translate it from Quiché into Spanish. Chonay translated it, and his translation became part of the public records in the court at Totonicapán, where Charles Etienne Brasseur de Bourbourg discovered it in 1860. The *Titulo* narrates two journeys to the east: [73](#)

Qocaib followed his road, defying dangers until he accomplished his mission, and Qocavib, meeting some obstacles on the shores of the Lake of México, returned without doing anything...

Qocaib arrived and gave an account of his mission...

Then:

The great men, the wise men, those of valor determined upon a second journey to the east. These men were Qocaib, Qocavib, Qoacul, Acutec, and shortly afterward Nim Chocoh Cavek...

Having reached the presence of Nacxit, there where the sun rises, they explained their errand. Nacxit received them and listened to them benignly, granted them what they asked, and gave many other insignia that the titled and other dignitaries must wear.

The Cakchiquel source is a history known as the *Annals of the Cakchiquels* in English and as the *Memorial de Sololá* or the *Memorial de Tecpán Atilán* in Spanish. Discovered by Juan Gavarrete in 1844 in the Franciscan monastery in Guatemala City, the *Annals* are in the Cakchiquel language, written by Francisco Hernández Arana and Francisco Díaz of the royal Xahila family. Hernández Arana finished the first part of the narrative around 1581.

The *Annals* state: [74](#)

They [the Cakchiquel emissaries] came ... before Mevac and Nacxit, who was truly a great king. Then they entertained them, and the Ahauh Ahpop and Ahpop Qamahay were chosen ... [He] gave them their offices and the flowers called *cinpual*. [75](#) Truly he made himself beloved by all the warriors. And turn mg to all of them, the Lord Nacxit said:

"Climb up to these columns of stone enter into my house. I will give you sovereignty, I will give you the flowers *cinpuval taxuch*. I have not granted the stone to others."

And thereupon they climbed up to the columns of stone. In this manner ended the granting of sovereignty to them in the presence of Nacxit, and they began to give shouts of joy.

Do these Quiché and Cakchiquel accounts tell about Kukulcán?

The title Nacxit is significant. Nacxit is derived from the Náhuatl word *nacxit* meaning "four feet," an elision of *nau*i, four, and *ixitl*, "foot." The *Book of Chilam Balam of Tizimín* mentions Ah Nacxit Kukulcán. Hernando Alvarado Tezozómoc in his *Crónica Mexicana* in 1598 applied the titles Náxitli and Ynácxitl to Quetzalcóatl and translated Ynacxitl as "walker". ⁷⁶ And in the *Memorial breve acerca de la fundación de la ciudad de Culhacán* ⁷⁷and the *Diferentes historias de los reinos de Culhacán, de México y otros desde los primeros tiempos de la gentilidad hasta el año, 1591*, ⁷⁸ written in the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century by Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin and Francisco de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Cuauhtlehuanitzin, designated Quetzalcóatl also as Ácxitl. Nacxit was, therefore, a name or title for Kukulcán-Quetzalcóatl.

Chichén Itzá and Mayapán in Yucatán are north of the Guatemalan highlands; but if the travelers descended the Chixoy and Usumacinta Rivers to Xicalango, the great *entrepôt* of pre-Spanish times, then Chichén Itzá and Mayapán would be toward the northeast and, as recorded in the *Titulo de los señores de Totonicapán*, the Lake of México would be toward the west.

All three of these chronicles trace the origin of the Quiché and Cakchiquel rulers to Tulan (Tula) in the Valley of México. The Cocomos and other Itzá invaders of Yucatán also were from México or Tabasco. Since these Mexicans in the time of Kukulcán ruled both in Yucatán and the Valley of México, where the Lake of México is, the Quichés and Cakchiquels were not certain where to send their emissaries; therefore, as related in the *Titulo de los señores de Totonicapán*, they sensibly dispatched Qocavib to the Lake of México and Qocaib "to the east" on the first embassy.

The *Annals of the Cakchiquels* quote Nacxit-Kukulcán as saying, "Climb up to these columns of stone." Columns of stone exist near the Temple of Kukulcán at Chichén Itzá and the Temple of Kukulcán at Mayapán.

The remark that the emissaries crossed the sea is intriguing, but presumably it means only that they traveled by boat along the coast from Xicalango to Champotón or Campeche.

The history of Kukulcán's departure from Yucatán is dim. Diego de Landa noted that "after his return he was regarded in México as one of their gods and called Cezalcuati," that "he returned by the same

route to México," and that "[on] the way he stopped in Champotón; and in memory of himself and his departure, he built in the sea a good building like that of Chichenizá, a long stone's throw from the shore." António de Herrera y Tordesillas parroted Landa that Kukulcán "returned to México, by the way he had gone, and [for] some time he tarried in Champotón, where, in memory of his journey, he built a large building in the sea, which nowadays is seen." Bartolomé de las Casas in his *Apologética historia* in 1559 wrote: "Quetzalcóatl ... according to their histories, came from the part of Yucatán to the city of Cholula .." ⁷⁹ Gerónimo de Mendieta echoed Las Casas: "Quetzalcóatl, ... according to their histories, came from the part of Yucatán...to the city of Cholula." ⁸⁰

If Kukulcán was the same man as Quetzalcóatl, as Landa, Torquemada, and the authors of the *Relaciones de Yucatán* indicated, Kukulcán necessarily resided in Yucatán before he settled in Tula or Cholula in México. Landa, Herrera y Tordesillas, Las Casas, and Mendieta concurred that Kukulcán-Quetzalcóatl went to México when he left Yucatán. One inconsistency is that Landa and Herrera y Tordesillas said that Kukulcán "returned" to México, thus implying that he was first in México, then in Yucatán, and again in México. The language of Landa and Herrera y Tordesillas suggests that Kukulcán initially sailed along the gulf coast of México, perhaps stopping intermittently, on his way to Champotón. The dating of Quetzalcóatl's adventures, as explained in Chapter VI, shows that if Kukulcán was the same person as Quetzalcóatl, his lengthy stay in Yucatán necessarily preceded his even more lengthy stay in México. No other sequence fits the Maya date of *katun* 4-Ahau, the dates offered in the Nahua sources, and a normal life span.

Landa and Herrera y Tordesillas agreed that Kukulcán left Yucatán via Champotón, a seaport on the west coast of Yucatán. If he departed from a seaport, he presumably left in a ship. For reasons that will be explained in Chapter IV, the "good building like that of Chichenizá" which Kukulcán "built in the sea...a long stone's throw from the shore," as told by Landa, and "large building" which Kukulcán "built ... in the sea," as narrated by Herrera y Tordesillas, was a sailing ship. The "good building" of Chichén Itzá is the pyramid at Chichén Itzá known to Landa to have been dedicated to Kukulcán; this massive edifice still stands at Chichén Itzá.

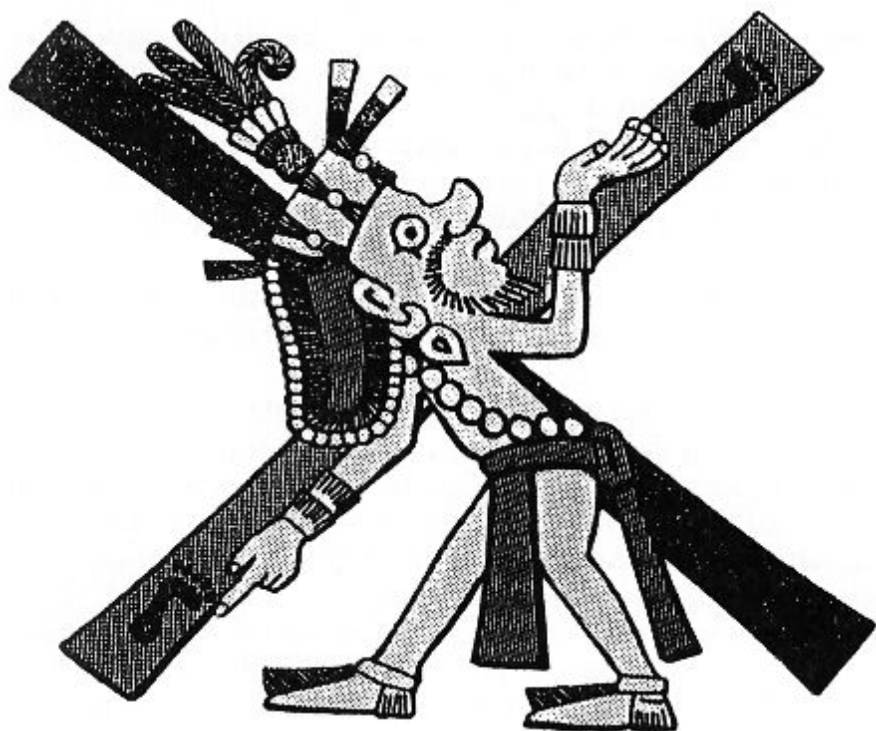
Why did Kukulcán leave Yucatán? Landa merely said that Kukulcán left "in much peace and friendship." Herrera y Tordesillas confirmed that "they all lived some years in much peace with Cuculcán, who governed them in justice until his departure was arranged" and that he commended to them "the good government in which he had left them." Kukulcán, therefore, left voluntarily, not as

the result of a rebellion or other compulsion, and he had enough time and was able to marshal enough craftsmen to build a ship at Champotón.



QUETZALCÓATL AS A WARRIOR

The bearded Quetzalcóatl is flanked by a serpent. (From a gold plate at Chichén Itzá, after Tozzer in Willey, 1966: Fig. 32-126)



LORD OF THE VANGUARD

Quetzalcóatl carries the cross. (From the *Codex Féjerváry Mayer*,
Nicholson, 1967: 93)

CHAPTER III. QUETZALCÓATL IN MÉXICO

The ancients worshipped Quetzalcóatl, who was ruler at Tula. And you named him Topiltzin. He was a common man; he was mortal....He was no god. And although a man of saintly life, who performed penances, he should not have been worshipped....The ancients went on to say that he went to Tlapallán; yet he will return. He is still expected....-Bernardino de Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*.

Leaving Yucatán from the port of Champotón in a ship ⁸¹ that he himself had caused to be built, Quetzalcóatl-Kukulcán sailed west and then north along the coast of the Gulf of México until he reached the mouth of the Pánuco River, near the present site of the oil-rich city of Tampico. As narrated by Bartolomé de las Casas in his *Historia apologética de las Indias* in 1559 and by Gerónimo de Mendieta in his *Historia eclesiástica indiana* in 1596, Quetzalcóatl according to the Indians' histories came from the part of Yucatán to the city of Cholula. ⁸² This succinct statement, which Las Casas' Nahua informants had recorded in documents written in glyphs, corroborates the word of Diego de Landa that Kukulcán went from Yucatán to México. ⁸³

Two other authors declared that Quetzalcóatl came to Tula by way of Pánuco. Diego Muñoz Camargo, a *meztizo* who became governor of Tlaxcala and who was fluent in Náhuatl, having learned the language from his Tlaxcalteca mother wrote in his *Historia de Tlaxcala* between 1585 and 1614 that "Quetzalcohuatl said that he came by way of the north and through Pánuco and from Pánuco through Tulancingo and through Tula, where he had his habitation. ⁸⁴ Juan de Torquemada, also fluent in Náhuatl, in 1615 published in his *Los veinte i un libros rituales i monarquía indiana* ⁸⁵

... certain nations of people, who arrived by way of Pánuco, came from the north...

These people moved onward from Pánuco with good diligence without either a warlike encounter of a battle...by chance coming as far as Tulla (where they arrived and were received and given lodging by the natives of that province) ...

...when these people arrived in Tullan [Tula], they brought with them a very important person as chief, who governed them, and whom they called Quetzalcohuatl (whom afterwards

the Cholultecas worshipped as a god).

Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin in his *Memorial breve acerca de la fundación de la ciudad de Culhuacán* in 1612 said that Quetzalcóatl appeared at Tula in México in "III. *tochtli xihuitl* 1002 anos [the year 4-Rabbit, 1002 A.D.].⁸⁶

Quetzalcóatl remained four years in Tulancingo, three years in Tula, and then resettled in Cholula. The reasons for concluding that Quetzalcóatl was in Tulancingo and Tula from 1002 to c.1009 are that Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin said that Quetzalcóatl arrived in 1002 ⁸⁷ the *Origen de los mexicanos* and the *Relación de la genealogía* say that he was initially in Tulancingo four years,⁸⁸ Bartolomé de las Casas and Gerónimo de Mendieta ⁸⁹ said that Quetzalcóatl stayed in Cholula 20 years, Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin said the Quetzalcóatl became *tlatoani* of Tula in 1029,⁹⁰ and Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin said that Quetzalcóatl fled from Tula in 1051.⁹¹ Since Quetzalcóatl became *tlatoani* of Tula in 1029 and remained *tlatoani* until his departure from Tula in 1051 and if he lived 20 years in Cholula but had first settled in Tula, the 20 years that best fits a residence in Cholula are the two decades preceding his inauguration as *tlatoani* of Tula: 1009-1029 A.D.

Why he then left Tula the first time is not certain, but apparently he had overstayed his welcome. Torquemada commented, "And it being seen by these new people [of Quetzalcóatl] that in Tulla they could not sustain themselves because the land was already so settled, they traveled onward and went to settle in Chollulan, where as a consequence they were very well received, where clearly it is known that they intermarried with the natives there and remained settled there for a long time." ⁹² Elsewhere Torquemada reported:⁹³

... in the land of Tula... Quetzalcohuatl.. was conquered by another wizard, greater and more powerful than he...and he relinquished the kingdom. Escaping he went to the city of Cholulla ...

Mendieta said that "Tezcatlipoca pursued ... Quetzalcóatl from settlement to settlement until he came to Cholula, where he was regarded as the principal idol, and there he was protected and remained for some years," that " ... in Tlaxcala and Huexotzingo... the Indians said that this Quetzalcóatl (although he was a native of Tula)

departed from there to settle the ... provinces of Tlaxcala, Huexotcingo, and Cholula," and that "he stayed twenty years in Cholula." ⁹⁴ Las Caas declared: "They [the Indians] affirm that he was twenty years with them [in Cholula]." ⁹⁵ Diego Durán noted: "... the disciples whom the Papa [Quetzalcóatl] brought, whom the called Toltecas and sons of the sun...had their principal seat [of government] in Cholula although they roamed all the land; they had that seat before the Cholutecas settled [there]." ⁹⁶ Bernardino de Sahagún related that a necromancer called Titlacúan (Tezcatlipoca) duped Quetzalcóatl into leaving Tula by making him drunk,⁹⁷ and Torquemada likewise blamed Titlacahua for this misdeed.⁹⁸ Another version heard by Diego Durán is:⁹⁹

... this saintly man went away because these wizards, he being absent from his retreat, with great secrecy had placed inside for him a whore, who was then living very lewdly [and] who had Xochiquetzal as her. name. And Topiltzin [Quetzalcóatl] returning to his cell and ignoring [not knowing] that which was inside, these malicious ones announced that Xochiquetzal was in the cell of Topiltzin, in order to destroy the opinion of him and his disciples that was held. Because Topiltzin was so chaste and virtuous, the affront that he received was great, and then he proposed his departure from the land.

Torquemada related also:¹⁰⁰

Being in Tullan, the lords of that place committed adultery, especially Tezcatlipoca Huémac; and seeing his bad end, he [Quetzalcóatl] left Tollan very angry and went to Cholullan, where he lived many years with his people; he sent some of them from there to settle the provinces of Huaxyacac, lower and upper Mixteca, and Tzaporecas ...

The *Anales de Cuauhtitlán* compound the downfall of Quetzalcóatl by attributing his initial departure from Tula to a combination of witchcraft by his enemies, drunkenness, and incest between him and his sister, Quetzalpetlatl. ¹⁰¹ As told by Sahagún ¹⁰² and by Torquemada,¹⁰³ Quetzalcóatl emigrated from Tula by the way of Quauhtitlán, which he renamed Huehuequauhtitlán, Temacpalco, Tepanoayán, and Coaapán or Cozcaapán and Cochtocán, all near the Lake of México, to Cholula. As Quetzalcóatl crossed the pass between

the huge mountains called Popocatépetl and Iztacépetl (Iztaccihuatl), Sahagtún added, "it snowed," " ... all of the pages of Quetzalcóatl, who were dwarfs and hunchbacks and who accompanied him, died of cold in this pass," and "Quetzalcóatl mourned deeply...the death of the pages ... crying very sadly, singing with tears, and sighing..".¹⁰⁴

The Nahuas knew Quetzalcóatl by several names: as Quetzalcóatl, which like Kukulcán in Yucatec Maya means "feathered serpent," as Papa, which means "priest" and "long hair," as Nácxitl, which is "four-footed," and as Topiltzin, which in Náhuatl is to + *pilli* + *tzin*, with to being the plural possessive pronoun "our," *pilli* being "prince," and *tzin* being an honorific suffix thus "our prince" or "our lord." Some called him Ce Acatl, 1-Reed, an appellation attributed to the Nahua year or day *ce acatl* when he reached or left Tula. No one knew his true name five centuries later when the Spaniards conquered.

The dress and faces of Quetzalcóatl and the men who accompanied him were strange. The descriptions in the sources sometimes apply to Quetzalcóatl himself, sometimes to pictures or images of Quetzalcóatl, and sometimes to his followers.

When Kukulcán-Quetzalcóatl and his crew of 19 men landed in Yucatán in 986 A.D., "they wore long clothes, sandals as footwear, [and] large beards and wore no hats on their heads." So a Yucatec Maya lord informed Francisco Hernández, and so he told Bartolomé de las Casas in 1545.¹⁰⁵

In Cholula, Hernán Cortes in 1519 presumably heard and presumably later told Francisco López de Gómara that Quetzalcóatl... never dressed otherwise than in a robe of white cotton, narrow and long, [and] over it a cloak strewn with reddish crosses."¹⁰⁶

A picture of Quetzalcóatl wearing a cloak with crosses on it, holding a crozier, and wearing a conical helmet, hood, or hat, a cloak, sandals, and a loincloth, appears in the *Códice Vaticano A* datable c.1563.¹⁰⁷

Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxóchitl in the early seventeenth century said that "Quetzalcóatl was of a well-disposed man, white and bearded" and that "[h]is clothing was a long tunic."¹⁰⁸

Juan de Torquemada in 1615 similarly noted that Quetzalcóatl "was of good disposition, white, fair, bearded, and well-disposed" and added that his "people were men who were well-dressed in long robes, in the manner of Turks, or in black linen like the cassocks of priests, open in front, without cowls, with the collars cut low, with short, wide sleeves that did not reach to the elbow."¹⁰⁹ Torquemada further commented that "their faces were marked, like [Irishmen]."¹¹⁰

Bartolomé de las Casas, Gerónimo de Mendieta, and Juan de Torquemada all reported that Quetzalcóatl "was a white man, tall in body, with a wide forehead, large eyes, long black hair, [and] a large

round beard."¹¹¹

Ixtlilxóchitl distinguished Quetzalcóatl and Huémac, whom he identified as the same man, from Topiltzin, who was, Ixtlilxóchitl said, a king of Tula named Meconetzin. As other kings of Tula, he mentioned Huetzin, Totepeuh, and Nacaxoc, adding that "[t]hese kings were tall in body, white, and bearded like the Spaniards ... ¹¹² Ixtlilxóchitl further observed that Topiltzin "was, according to their histories, a white man and tall in body like his father and of good features (and with] flashing, steady eyes ... "¹¹³ Topiltzin, Ixtlilxóchitl noted, was the bastard son of a king named Iztaccaltzin and Quetzal Xochitzin (Quetzalxochitzin), wife of Papantzin,¹¹⁴ or of a king named Tecpancaltzin¹¹⁵ and his concubine Xóchitl.¹¹⁶ Ixtlilxóchitl continued that "Xóchitl was a man of good body, white and bearded, although not much, valiant and of highest thoughts,"¹¹⁷ saying that Xóchitl became the ruler of Tula some years after its destruction.

From a picture of Quetzalcóatl "in the city of México," Diego Durán described Quetzalcóatl as "a venerable presence ... a man of age, his beard long, greyish, and red; his nose, somewhat long, with some welts on it, or somewhat eaten; tall in body; his hair long; very gentle, with a very serious composure."¹¹⁸ In another picture, Durán saw "Huéymac [Quetzalcóatl in the context] with a long gown and a large hat on his head" and in yet another picture observed that Topiltzin [Quetzalcóatl] wore "a crown of feathers" when he celebrated *fiestas*.¹¹⁹ Durán continued:¹²⁰

The disciples of this saintly man walked with some long cassocks to their feet; they wore on their heads covers of cloth or bonnets. When the Indians wanted to paint the hoods or bonnets that they [the disciples] wore, they painted snails. Also the cassocks were of different colors. Some of them worn their hair long, which heads of hair these Indians after wards called *papa*... They went dressed in cassocks of colors, which the Indians called *xicolli*; and because of the hoods which they wore on their heads, they [the Indians] called them *cuateccizce*, which is to say, "heads with snail shells."

Bernardino de Sahagún in his Náhuatl text wrote about Quetzalcóatl:¹²¹

...he was monstrous. His face was like a.. battered... fallen rock ... And his beard was very long... He was heavily bearded.

But Sahagún's parallel Spanish text reads somewhat differently:¹²²

His statue was always displayed and covered with cloaks. The face that it had was ugly, with a long head and bearded.

Torquemada reiterated this remark.¹²³

Ixtlilxóchitl, though not mentioning Quetzalcóatl in the context, described the apparel worn by the Toltecas:¹²⁴

The Tulteca men, particularly in time of warmth, dressed in their cloaks and trunks of cotton; and in times of coldness they donned some long jackets without sleeves, which reached to their knees, with their cloaks and trunks; they wore shoes in their style, "cotaras" or "catles [cactli]" of henequen the women their "huipiles" and petticoats and likewise their "cotaras" of their own; and when they went outside they donned some white cloaks embroidered with many colors, sharp-pointed at the shoulders, as in the manner of a hood of a friar although they reached to the knee pits; they called this cloak "toxquemilt".

The priests worn some [white] tunics and others black ones that reached to the ground, with their hoods with which they covered the[ir] head[s], their hair long, plaited, which reached to the shoulders, their eyes always lowered and humble, their feet bare at the time of their fasts; and when they were in the temple they seldom wore shoes unless they went outside on a long journey...

When the Tultecas fought, they donned some [clothes] in the manner of long tunics of a thousand colors to their heels, embroidered and very thick and heavy... [and some had] long lances and others [spear] throwers and clubs studded with iron [iron swords?]. They wore helmets ["morrones y celadas"] of copper and gold, and some used bucklers, principally those who carried clubs. Likewise the Tultecas wore the rest of the clothes that I have mentioned above, tunics like those of the priests, white although different, neither more nor less than the tunics that our religious priests wear underneath; for besides being like these, they have [had] sleeves like those of the "oidores" and certain hoods, as I have already declared above...

Their clothing was some long tunics in the manner of the long robes which the Japanese use and as footwear they wore sandals and used some[thing] in the manner of hats made of straw or palm.

Bernal Díaz del Castillo in 1566 remembered the garb of the indigenous priests that he had seen in 1519. The Maya priests of

Campeche, he recalled, wore "long cotton cloaks that reached to their feet and were white."¹²⁵ In Cingapacinga, "the habit which those [Totonaca] *papas* [priests] wore were some blackish cloaks in the manner of soutanes and cassocks, long to the feet, and some [were] like hoods which resembled those which the canons wear, and others wore smaller hoods, like those which the Dominicans wear."¹²⁶ In Tlaxcala, the Nahua priests "wore clothes in the manner of surplices, and they were white and they wore hoods on them, which resembled those which the canons wore."¹²⁷ And in Tenochtitlán, Díaz del Castillo described the Nahua "*papas* with their long apparel of blackish cloaks and long hoods likewise [blackish], like [those] of the Dominicans and slightly like those of the canons."¹²⁸

Four other reports, two recorded by Sahagún, one by Durán, and one by Tovar, also are curious. Sahagún in his narrative of Quetzalcóatl's first departure from Tula recorded in Náhuatl:¹²⁹

In another place [a place other than the white mountain named Poyautécatl] it is said that he took his pleasure on a mountain. He came sliding down it, to its foot; he came bouncing down it.

In this Spanish text, Sahagún said:¹³⁰

Further, they say that Quetzalcóatl went amusing himself on a mountain range, sat on the top of the mountain range, and came descending, seated, as far as the soil and thus he did it many times.

Thus Quetzalcóatl went sledding or tobogganing or otherwise played in the snow on Popocatépetl or Iztaccihuatl, an activity apparently regarded by Sahagún as odd indeed. Further, Sahagún reported a practice instituted by Quetzalcóatl that was like the Althing in Iceland. The Althing was a parliament and court attended by Icelanders from all quarters of the country. There the law speaker recited the law to the assembled populace, and there 36 *godar* (later 39) litigated disputes. The Althing reached a zenith in the tenth century. As explained by Sahagún in Náhuatl:¹³¹

And there was a hill named Tzatzitépetl. Just so it is named today. It is said that there the crier stationed himself; (for) that which was required he placed himself there in order to announce (it). He was heard in distant places; everywhere was

heard what he said, the laws that were made. Swiftly all would come forth to learn what Quetzalcóatl had commanded the people.

Another mystery is that the inquisitive Durán, although apprehensive about being summoned before the Holy Inquisition for heresy, wrote: [132](#)

Also an old Indian said to me that Papa, passing through Ocuituco, had left them a large book, four fingers in height, of some letters. And I, motivated by a desire to see this book, went to Ocuituco and requested the Indians, with all the humility of the world, to show it to me. And they swore that it had been six years since they burned it because they could not succeed in reading the letter[s], nor were they like ours, and fearing lest they cause themselves some evil, they burned it...I reprimanded those who had ordered it burned.

Durán surmised it was a *Bible* written in Hebrew but cautiously inserted that "in all I subject myself to the correction of the Holy Catholic Church."

Juan de Tovar in the late sixteenth century wrote that Quetzalcóatl "left in this land a book like a missal, which has never been discovered by the great diligence the religious have put into it; it may be understood that it was the Bible," and that "those who were more persuaded encountered in a settlement which is near the sea in this land a very ancient tanned hide where all the mysteries of our faith were drawn without omitting any in figures of the Indians although with many errors."[133](#)

Bernardino de Sahagún[134](#) in the mid-sixteenth century, Francisco Hernández [135](#) (the physician in México, not the priest in Yucatán) in 1574, Gerónimo de Mendieta [136](#) in 1596 and Juan de Torquemada [137](#) in 1615 said that Quetzalcóatl invented the calendar. Kukulcán-Quetzalcóatl having lived as recently as the tenth and eleventh centuries A.D., was not an inventor of the calendar, but he might have spread the idea, having learned it in Yucatán or Tabasco.

While he was in México, Quetzalcóatl taught the science of metallurgy the smelting and working of silver and gold - and encouraged the craft of stonecutting. In his Náhuatl text, Sahagún declared:[138](#)

And the Toltecs, his vassals, were highly skilled. Nothing that they did was difficult (for them). They cut green stones, and they cast gold, and they made other works of the craftsman and featherwork. Very skilled were they. These started and proceeded from Quetzalcóatl all craft works and wisdom.

In his parallel Spanish text, Sahagún explained:¹³⁹

The vassals which he had were all craftsmen of mechanical arts and skilled in carving the green stones which are called *chalchihuites* and in smelting silver and doing other things. These arts all had their origin from.. . Quetzalcóatl.

Then, Sahagún continued in his Náhuatl text, Quetzalcóatl fled from Tula and "left all the arts the casting of gold, the cutting of precious stones, the carving of wood, sculpturing in stone, the knowledge of the scribes, the art of featherworking."¹⁴⁰ Sahagún's Spanish text reads, "The necromancers said to Quetzalcóatl...leave all of your mechanical arts of smelting silver, working stones and wood, painting, making plumage, and other skills."¹⁴¹

Torquemada stated:¹⁴²

... there [in Tula the followers of Quetzalcóatl] were much regaled because they were a very skillful and clever people, with great projects and industries. They worked gold and silver, and they were great craftsmen in every art. They were great lapidaries, of the highest degree. Thus for these exquisite things, for giving other industries for human sustenance, for working and tilling the land for the first time, by their good government and great industries and talents, they had great influence with them; and wherever they went, they held them in great respect and did them great honor.

Las Casas and Mendieta said that Quetzalcóatl "taught them the craft of silversmithing, which never until then had been known or seen in this land, about which the native inhabitants of that city [Cholula] boasted much."¹⁴³

Durán noted that Quetzalcóatl "was a stonecutter who carved images of stone and cut them carefully," that the Toltecas "made heroic things with their hands," that Quetzalcóatl "went carving crosses and images on rocks," and that his disciples they called

"Tolteca," which is to say, "artificers and craftsmen in every art."¹⁴⁴

Twentieth century archaeology lends some credence to the metallurgical part of the Quetzalcóatl legend. As stated by Muriel Porter Weaver in 1972:¹⁴⁵

The concept of metal working was understood in these areas [the southern Maya region and southern, eastern, and central México] by A.D. 900 and became widespread in Mesoamerica shortly thereafter. This is considerably later than in South America, where the knowledge was well-advanced by A.D. 300.

Archaeological dates, whether based on stratigraphy, associated artifacts, or carbon-14 tests, are not exact, and the date of A..D. 900 could be a century too early. Thus the archaeological evidence supports the thought that the knowledge of metallurgy arrived at approximately the same time as Kukulcán-Quetzalcóatl in Yucatán and México.

The religious activities of Quetzalcóatl are more astonishing than silversmithing and goldsmithing.

Toribio de Benevente - more commonly known by his Náhuatl name of Motolinía - was one of the first missionary priests in México after the conquest, arriving in 1524; a Spaniard, he assiduously studied the Náhuatl language. In 1555, he wrote:¹⁴⁶

... Quetzalcóatl... became a virtuous and temperate man, [who] commenced the [practice of] preaching, according [to what] is said, the natural law, and teaching the [practice of] fasting by example and word; and from this time many in this land commenced fasting; he was not married, nor did he know any woman [carnally], but he lived virtuously and chastely.

They say he was the first one who commenced the [practice of] sacrifice and of extracting blood from the ears and the tongue, not to serve the demon but in penance against the vice of the tongue and hearing; afterwards, the demon applied it to his cult and service.

Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxóchitl extolled the "great virtues" of Quetzalcóatl and described him as "pious, saintly, and good, a man who by deeds and words taught them the path of virtue and saved them from the vices and sins, giving laws and good doctrine" and

added that "in order to restrain them from their lusts and lewdnesses, he established the practice of fasting," that "he was the first one who adored and erected the cross which some called *quiahuiteotlchichahualizteotl* [*quiahtzteotlchichahualizteotl*] and others *tonacaquahuitl*, which is to say, god of the rains and of health and the tree of sustenance or of life," and that he "preached these things in almost all of the cities" of the Ulmecas and Xicalangas, and especially in Cholula, where he stayed a long time ... "147

Writing about Cholula, Francisco López de Gómara, whose principal informant was Hernán Cortés himself, penned that in 1519:148

The greatest idol of their gods they call Quetzalcouatl, god of the air, who was the founder of the city, a virgin, as they say, and of the greatest penances, institutor of fasting, of withdrawing blood from the tongue and ears, and to whom they did not sacrifice except quails, doves, and things of the hunt.

Sahagún commented in Náhuatl:149

... there [at Tula] ... was his temple...There, it is said, he lay covered; and he lay with only his face covered...And this Quetzalcóatl also did penances. He bled the calf of his leg to stain thorns with blood. And he bathed at midnight ... at a place named Xippacoyan.

Sahagún further recorded in Náhuatl and Spanish that "Quetzalcóatl... did not want more than snakes and butterflies to be offered and given to him in sacrifice."150

Las Casas and Mendieta were more detailed than Sahagún:151

They offered him gentle, the most devout, and voluntary sacrifices ... he never wanted or accepted blood sacrifices of either men or animals but only of bread, roses, and flowers ... he forbade and prohibited with great efficacy war, thefts, and murders, and other injuries which they did to each other.

This Quetzalcóatl was much praised also because he was chaste and virtuous and most modest in many things...the rule of that one was gentle and he taught them virtues, prohibiting evils and injuries and exhibiting abhorrence toward them, from which it clearly appeared that the Indians who made human sacrifices did not do it voluntarily but because of the great fear that they had for the demon and because of the threats which

he had made to them that he would destroy them and cause bad storms and many misfortunes if they did not comply with that which he commanded to be accepted by them as a custom.

Durán, suspected that Quetzalcóatl was some apostle, lengthily recorded what the Nahuas knew:¹⁵²

....I want to discuss a great man who arrived in this country, his religious life, the cult which he taught, how the Mexicans, having information about him inspired to create ceremonies and cults, to worship idols, to erect altars and temples, and to offer sacrifices.

This Topiltzin, who by another name these INdians called Papa, was a very venerable and religious person, whom they held in great veneration, and venerated him as a saintly person

...

He was always secluded in a cell, praying, and was only a few times allowed to be seen. He was a very abstinent man and a faster; he lived chastely and very penitently; he had as an activity the erection [of] altars and oratories for all districts and the emplacement [of] images on the walls above the altars, kneeling before them, revering them and kissing the ground, sometimes with his mouth, other times with his hand [during] the practice of which there was continuous prayer; he always slept on the step of the alter which he erected on the ground. He thus gained disciples, and he taught them to pray and to preach...

....after he arrived in this land, he and his disciples left to preach throughout the settlements, they climbed hills to preach ... They preached in the valleys... Topiltzin passing through these settlements that I have mentioned, they say that he went carving crosses and images rocks.

....an old Indian...related to me ... that all the ceremonies and rites, the erection [of] temples and in them, the fasting and altara, the placing [of] idols in them, the fasting and going naked, the sleeping on the ground, the climbing of mountains to preach there his law, the kissing [of] the soil and eating it with their fingers, and the playing of shells [trumpets],and the frivolities in their solemnities, all were to imitate that saintly man, who perfumed altars and had instruments played in the oratories which he erected.

... The lords of this land requested this saintly man Huíyman [Quetzalcóatl in the context] to marry, and he responded that he had already determined to marry but it had

to be when the oak tree would produce apples and the sun would leave through the contrary part [the opposite direction] and when he could pass on the sea without labor, and when the nightingales would grow beards like men.

The *Anales de Quauhtitlán* say:[153](#)

In this (year) 2-Reed, Topiltzin Ce Acatl Quetzalcóatl erected his house of fasts, place of his penance and prayer; he built four apartments, one of green boards, another of corals, another of shells, and another of *quetzal* feathers, where he prayed and did penance and passed his fasts. Even at midnight he descended to the canal, where it is called Atecpanamochco. He constructed his house of thorns in the height of Xicócotl, in Huitzcoc, in Tzincoc, and also in Nonohualcatépec. He made his thorns and his laurel branches of precious stones and *quetzal* feathers. He fumigated turquoises, emeralds, and corals; and his offering was of snakes, birds, and butterflies, which he sacrificed...

When Quetzalcóatl lived, he began his temple; he put on it columns in the form of a snake...

... when Quetzalcóatl lived, the demons repeatedly wanted to deceive him so that he would make human sacrifices, killing men. But he never wanted (to do so) or condescended, for he loved his vassals, who were the Toltecas, much ... his sacrifice always was only snakes, birds, and butterflies that he killed ... Then it is reported how Quetzalcóatl went away. When he did not obey them by sacrificing humans, the demons conspired ...

In Yucatán, Diego de Landa in 1566, copied by António de Herrera y Tordesillas in 1601-1615, reported that Kukulcán was "well-disposed and had neither wife nor children."[154](#) Francisco Hernández told his bishop, Bartolomé de las Casas, that Kukulcán's followers "ordered the people to confess and to fast ..." [155](#) Landa confirmed that confession and fasting were Yucatec Maya practices in the sixteenth century before the Spanish missionaries came. [156](#)

The Spaniards reflected about some similarities between Christian and Maya-Nahua religious concepts and practices.

Diego de Landa in 1566 recorded some Christian-like religious practices of the Mayas in Yucatán:[157](#)

Baptism is not found in any, pan of the Indias except in

Yucatán, and (it exists) even with a word which means "to be born anew or again," which is the same as the Latin "to be reborn"; for in the language of Yucatán *zihil* means "to be born anew or again," and it is not used except in compound words, and thus *caputzihil* means "to be born again."

We have not been able to know its origin, except that it is a thing which they have always used and toward which they had so much devotion that nobody failed to receive it and (so much) reverence that those who had sins, if they are known to have been committed, had to reveal them to the priests; and such faith (they had) in it that they never repeated the sin in any manner ...

The Yucatánenses naturally knew what evil they did; and because they believed that through evil and sin came death, illnesses, and torments to them, they had confession as a custom...when through illness or otherwise they were in danger of death... to the priest if he was there, and it not, to their fathers and mothers, wives to husbands, and husbands to wives ...

The sins of which they commonly accused themselves were theft, homicide, of the flesh, and false witness and with this they believed themselves saved; and many times, if they escaped [death], there were quarrels between the husband and the wife ...

Landa declared also that the Mayas did penances.

Diego Durán, though he himself sometime suspected a pre-Spanish Christian influence in México, became angry when Nahuas mentioned religious coincidences to him, and he blamed the devil:[158](#)

... I heard an old Indian woman, whom they brought to me for her wisdom in the law, who might have been a priestess, say that also they had Easter and Christmas, like us and at the same time as we, and Corpus Christi, and she pointed out other important (Nahua) feasts which we (also) celebrate.

I responded to her: "Evil woman, (it is) the devil who so well knew how to plot and sow his weeds and mix them with the wheat so that you could not completely know the truth!"

Saints' days in the European calendar and Nahua feast days being so numerous, some of them had to coincide, especially Christmas,

Easter, and other celebrations of equinox and solstice.

Josef de Acosta, a Jesuit commentator, like many other priests, thought that the devil had been busy leading the people of México astray. To assure to the devil the blame that was just, Acosta penned the entire fifth book¹⁵⁹ of his *Historia natural y moral de las Indias* in 1589, announcing that the "arrogance of the devil is so great and so obstinate that always he craves and endeavors to be regarded and honored as God; and in all he can steal and appropriate to himself that which belongs alone to the highest God, he never ceases to do it in the blind nations of the world where the light and splendor of the holy evangelist has not shone." As diabolical machinations in Christian guise, Acosta cited the facts that:

(1) "It was the office of the priests and religious ones in México... to inter the dead and to do their funerals ..."

(2) "In México there was this strange curiosity; and the demon imitating the usage of the Church of God, he placed his orders of minor, major, and supreme priests and some like acolytes and others like levites ... it appears that the devil wanted to usurp the cult of Christ for himself, for the Mexicanos in the ancient language called the supreme priests.. . *papas*."

(3)"In México the demon had also his ... nuns and monks ...and monasteries..."

(4)"...the priests and religious ones of México arose at midnight; and the priests having fumigated the idol, they themselves as dignitaries of the temple went to a place of a wide room, where there were many seats, and there they sat. and each one taking a point of maguey, which is like an awl or a sharp punch, or with another type of lancet or knife, punctured the calves of their legs together with the shinbone(s), drawing from themselves much blood with which they smeared the temples (of their heads), bathing the points or lancets with the rest of the blood, and afterwards they put them between the battlements of the courtyard so that all would see them and understand the penance that they did for the people."

(5)"... they had great fasts, these priests and religious ones ..."

(6)"They keep their continence ... strictly..."

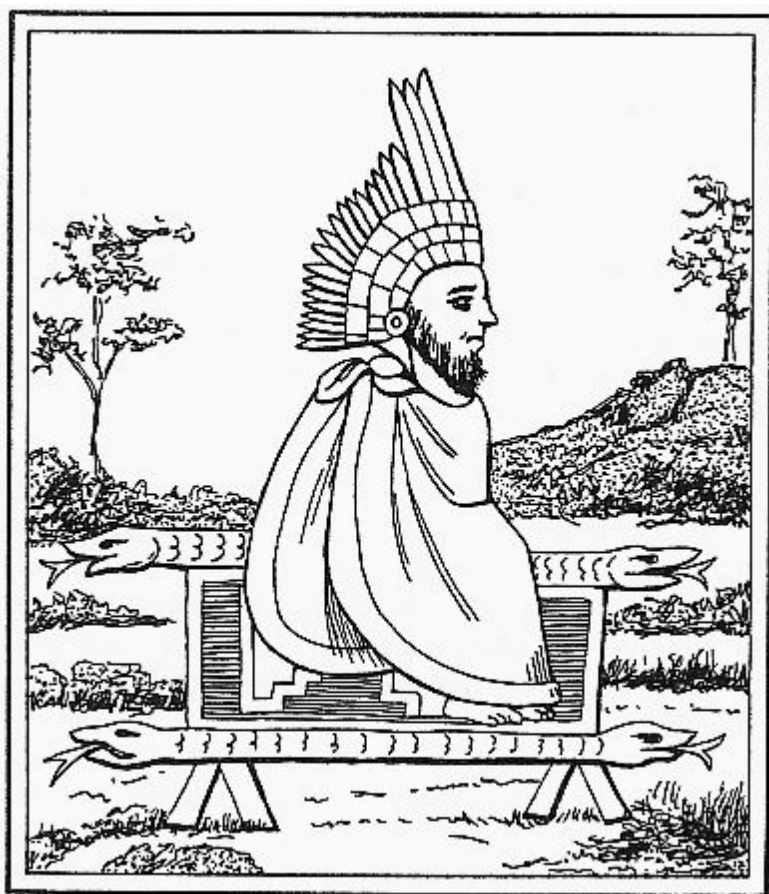
(7)"...the demon endeavored in México to imitate the feast of Corpus Christi and communion which the Holy Church uses...In the month of May, the Mexicans have their principal feast of their god Vitzilipaztli (Huitchilopochtli)..."

(8)"The Mexicans have also their baptisms..."

(9)"The Mexicans marry themselves by the hand of their

priests..."

Still accusing the devil, Acosta, who was well-read and who traveled widely, observed that some of these customs prevailed in Peru, China, and Japan also; and thus he argued that they are devilish coincidences and not the fruits of Christian evangelism.



QUETZALCÓATL ON HIS SERPENT RAFT
(From the *Atlas de Durán*, Leon-Portilla. 1968: Fig. 52)



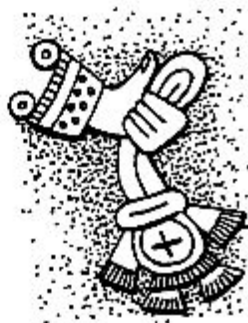
ROBE OF REDDISH CROSSES

Quetzalcóatl stands with his robe of red crosses, a cone-shaped headdress, crozier, and barbs through his calves. (From the *Vatican Codex*, Leon-Portilla, 1968: Fig. 52)



QUETZALCÓATL AS A PRIEST

Quetzalcóatl instructs a disciple. (From a mural at Chichén Itzá,
Seler, 1915: Fig. 209)



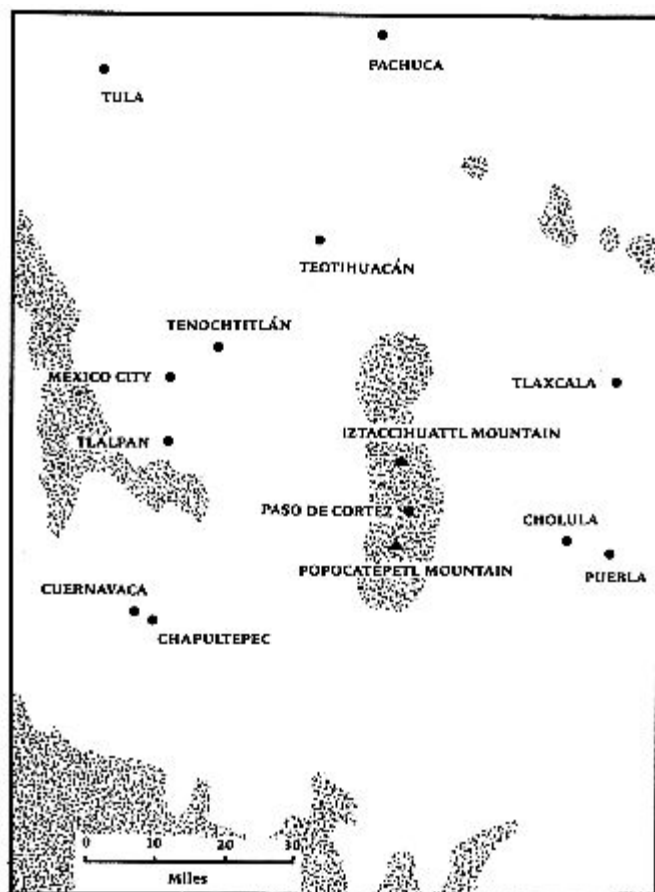
CROSS OF QUETZALCÓATL

A shell engraving (left) portrays Quetzalcóatl emerging from the mouth of a serpent (Covarruias, 1957: Fig. 87). Crosses are also found on Quetzalcóatl's medicine bag (right) from an Aztec codex (Leon-Portilla, 1968: Fig. 40) and Mayan sculptures representing the hieroglyph for Venus (right-bottom from Copan, after Seler, 1915: Fig. 28).



QUETZALCÓATL DOING PENANCE

Quetzalcóatl passes a spine through his calf to draw blood in an act of self-sacrifice. (From an illustration in the *Codex Florentine*, Leon-Portilla, 1968: Fig. 55).



Map of Cholula and Tula

Chapter IV. THE FALL OF QUETZALCÓATL

. .. your renown will never be extinguished, for your vassals will weep for it. *Cantares mexicanos*.

... he ran ... but he promised to return, with great might to avenge his injuries and to redeem his people from wrongs and tyrannies - Torquemada, *Veinte y un libros rituales i monarquia indiana*.....

After staying in Cholula for 20 years and preaching throughout the central area of the present Republic of México, Quetzalcóatl returned to live in Tula. Perhaps he had two capitals, both Cholula and Tula; for Ixtlilxóchitl commented that Tula, Cholula, and Teotihuacán were together one polity. ¹⁶⁰ Perhaps Quetzalcóatl seized power in Tula as the result of a disputed succession or absence or weakness of his enemies there.

Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin, who probably was the same person as Francisco de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Cuauhtlehuanitzin, lived 1579-1660. Born in Amecameca, he was a descendant of the pre-Spanish rulers of Chalco. He was not a priest, but he devoted most of his life to the service of the church of San Antonio Abad in México City. He was a cautious historian, and he wrote in Náhuatl. In his *Memorial breve acerca de la fundación de la ciudad de Culhuacán* in 1612, he narrated these events:

161

Year 4-Reed 963 A.D. Here in this (year) was born the son Huéymac to the lord prince, the royal prince called Totepeuh, inhabitant of Culhuacán...

Year 13-House 985 A.D....And immediately in this year the one called Totepeuh was installed, became the sixth *tlatoani* of all Culhuacán, lord father of this Huéymac.

Year 2-Reed 987... At the same time married the one called Huéymac, there in Tototépec, in Metztitlán. The one called Teton became his father in-law and the one called Maxio became his wife when Totepeuh, the lord father of Huéymac, royal prince, had ruled Culhuacán three years. So Huéymac had lived twenty-five years on earth when he married there in Totepe...

Year 8-House 993 A.D. Here in this (year) was installed the one called Huéymac there in Tullam, the son of Totepeuh,

tlatoani of Culhuacán, and were installed over (Huéymac) Nauhyotzin and Opochtli when Totepeuh, the father, had already ruled Culhuacán nine years. So when Huéymac was installed in Tullam, he had already lived thirty-one years on earth ...

Year 4-Rabbit 1002 A.D. Here in this (year) was born Topiltzin Ácxitl Quetzalcohuatl there in Tullam. But he certainly was not born, he only came, for there he himself appeared. Whence he came was not learned well, so the old men say. (He came) when Totepeuh, *tlatoani* of Culhuacán, had already ruled eighteen years.

Year 2-Rabbit 1026 A.D. Here in this (year) died If0repeun, the sixth *tlatoani* of Culhuacán, who ruled forty-two years. And then immediately in this named year, was installed there the one called Nauhyotzin the Second, so called the seventh *tlatoani* of tormented Culhuacán, when Topiltzin Ácxitl Quetzalcohuatl had already lived in Tullam twenty five years.

Year 5-House 1029 A.D. Here in this (year), some old men related, died Huéimac, *tlatoani* of Tullam, who ruled thirty-seven years. In the same (year) Topiltzin Ácxitl Quetzalcohuatl was installed there in Tullam when Quetzalcohuatl had already lived there in Tullam twenty-eight years.

Year 12-Flint 1036 A.D. Here in this (year) began the omens that tormented the people of Tullam. Already the one named Topiltzin Ácxitl Quetzalcohuatl had lived thirty-five (years) there in Tullam.

Year 3-Flint 1040 A.D. Here in this (year) the people of Tullam scattered widely. (It was the year) when the Tulteca people started leaving, when they departed, when they migrated elsewhere. There (some) died and some resettled. Thus the Chololtecas did, for they are offshoots of the Tultecas. During five years omens tormented the Tultecas.

Year 1-Reed 1051 A.D. In this (year) very certainly departed Topiltzin Ácxitl Quetzalcohuatl as final defeat ruined the settlement of Tullam. He entered the great sky-water, above (where the) sun rises afresh as he killed himself, died there in Poctlán Tlapallán (place-of-smoke-place-of-redness). He said he would return once again, once again he would build the settlement of Tullam.

Juan de Torquemada, a priest, a Spaniard whose dates were 1572?-1624, if not born in México came to México when quite young. In his history, entitled *Veinte i un libros rituales i monarquía indiana* and

published in Sevilla in 1615 and in Madrid in 1723, he tried to encompass all information about New Spain known in his generation, not only the writings of other Spanish authors, whose works he cited, but also the pictographic and glyphic accounts preserved and interpreted by Nahua savants. His book is a mine of information. He was an architect and engineer, reconstructing the church of Santiago Tlatelolco from 1603 to 1610 and building the Calzada de Guadalupe and the Calzada de Chapultépec in México City. Torquemada [162](#) amplified Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin's narrative:

King Huémac... was very powerful and very fearsome, and he made them worship him as a god. He departed from Tulla through various parts of New Spain to enlarge his kingdom. Throughout his reign, he occupied himself in conquering and gaining lands and provinces, following more the arrogance of war than the tranquility and quietude of peace.

Because this king was absent and always engaged in wars, the Tultecas raised Nuahyotin as their king and lord; he ... was a Chichimeca ...

Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin said that Nauhyotzin the Second became *tlatoani* in 1026 A.D. [163](#) and Torquemada continued that Nauhyotzin "likewise departed from Tullam and marched toward this lake (of México) with a great force of people to conquer all that he could on his borders" and that he died. [164](#) Then, by Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin's account, in the year 5-House, 1029 A.D., "Topiltzin Ácxitl Quetzalcohuatl was installed there in Tullam" [165](#) The *Anales de Cuauhtitlán* concur; [166](#)

.. 5-House. In this year, the Tultecas went to bring Quetzalcóatl to install him as their *tlatoani* in Tollan. Also he was their priest.

Torquemada mentioned Quetzalcóatl as a contemporary of Huémac but omitted Quetzalcóatl from his list of the kings of Tula. [167](#) In his Spanish text but not in his Náhuatl text, Sahagún explained: "...Huémac... was lord of the Toltecas in temporal matters, for Quetzalcóatl was like a priest and had no children." [168](#) In both his Náhuatl and Spanish versions, Sahagún treated Quetzalcóatl and

Huemac as contemporaries. 169 Both Ixtlilxóchitl 170 and Durán 171 regarded Quetzalcóatl and Huémac as the same man, Durán interchanging the names Papa, Topiltzin, Huéymac, and Quetzalcóatl in his history.

Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin was not sure that Huémac died in the year 5-House, 1029 A.D., the year when Quetzalcóatl became *tlatoani* of Tula; for Chimalpahin added: 172

But other old men for the so-named year 1-Reed well interpret the writings to the effect that the *tlatoani* Quetzalcohuatl moved before Huéymac, whom he could not see, as he fled from Tullan to Cincalco Chapultépec. They fought each other until he entered Cincalco. Thus the old men tell all the known truth. So he resided in Tullan forty-nine years, and so altogether, from the beginning, from birth, Huéymac lived on earth seventy-eight years; so when he entered the named Cincalco Chapultépec, the one called Nauhyotzin the Younger had ruled Culhuacán twenty-five years.

The Náhuatl *cincalco* is *cintli* (corn) + *acalli* (boat) + *co* (inside of). Cincalco is "inside the corn boat," and Chapultépec is "grasshopper hill"- a rocky crest in México City. This passage means that Huéymac entered "inside a corn boat like Grasshopper Hill" an allusion to a corn-provisioned ship. (If Huémac's birth date was 963, he was 88 years old in 1051, not 78.) If Quetzalcóatl became *tlatoani* of Tula in 1029, Huémac regarded Quetzalcóatl as a usurper and ousted him 22 years later in 1051. Both were old men.

Laconically Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin recorded: 173

Year 12-Flint 1036 A.D. Here in this (year) began the omens that tormented the people of Tullam.

Sahagún expanded the story: 174

... a mountain, called Cacatépetl, burned. By night, it was evident from afar how it burned. The flames rose high.

When the Toltecs saw it, they became very restless; they raised their hands to heaven; there was great anxiety. All cried out, all shouted together. No longer was there tranquility; no longer was there peace. And when they saw this omen of evil, they said: "O Toltecs, now all in truth is going; already the

power of the Toltecs goes. Yea, we are forsaken. What shall we do? Where shall we go? O unhappy we! Let us take heart!"

...stones rained on the Toltecs. And when the stones rained, then a large sacrificial stone (meteorite) fell from the heavens; there at Chapoltépecuitlapilco it came falling down...They were as if lost.

...the food soured - very bitter did it become. It could not be placed in one's mouth; none of the Toltecs could eat the food...

And an old woman . . . came to sit there at Xochitlán. There she toasted maize (corn). And the maize which she toasted spread its fragrance over the region. In truth it expanded and spread among all who dwelt (there). All over the land was spread the odor of the toasted maize...

As reported by Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin in his *Memorial breve acerca de la fundación de la ciudad de Culhacán* [175](#) and by Miguel de Quetzalmazatzin, [176](#) a star smoked above the city of Tula for eleven years from 1040 to 1051. And as tersely phrased by Chimalpahin, [177](#) "Year 3-Flint 1040 A.D. Here in this (year) the people of Tullam scattered widely." Then: [178](#)

Year 1-Reed 1051 A.D. Here in this (year) very certainly went Topitlzin Ácxitl Quetzalcohuatl as final defeat ruined the settlement of Tullam. He entered the great sky-water above (where the) sun rises afresh, as he killed himself, died there in Poctlán Tlapallán. He said he would return once again, once again he would build the settlement of Tullam.

What happened to Quetzalcóatl in Tula? Several other accounts exist. One, told by Torquemada, is that Huémac attacked: [179](#)

Quetzalcohuatl... received news that Huémac, his great enemy, was coming with many people in his command and that he was destroying and laying waste to all things that he found in the provinces through which he passed and perpetrating many cruelties and tyrannies.

Because Quetzalcohuatl regarded King Huémac as a great warrior, he did not want to wait for him and determined to leave the city; and this he did, and he left with a large part of his people, explaining his departure by saying that he was going to visit other provinces and the peoples he had sent to settle the

lands of Onohualco, which are neighbors of the sea and are the ones that now we call Yucatán, Tabasco, and Campeche, in all of which of these provinces the natives are named, in general, Onohualco.

Finally, Quetzalcohuatl seeing that... Huémac was coming against him with such great armies and forces, he did not want to wait for it, and it could be that he adjusted himself to it because of finding himself already, very old, or because of not (wanting) to have more skirmishes with him, or of exposing his honor and people to danger, fearing to lose them, or to save what he had gained and settled. We do not know his intent. Only it is said that he went away, and he did not want to wait.

Arriving at the place where he expected to find his enemy Quetzalcohuatl and knowing that he had gone away, Huémac regretted it very much; and with the anger that he received (this information), he committed great massacres of all those who he could catch in the land; and so much was the fear that they felt for him that he made them worship him as a god, endeavoring in this way to destroy and obscure the ritual that Quetzalcohuatl had left in that city and to make himself lord, not only of the city of Cholullan but also of Atlixco and the provinces of Tepavacac, Tecamachalco, Quecholac, and Tehuacán - of all of which he was king and lord, and even afterwards (he was) worshipped as god of all of them...

Another version, noted by Sahagún and Ixtlilxóchitl, is that Quetzalcóatl departed voluntarily. Having narrated the omens and sorceries that afflicted Tula and Quetzalcóatl, Sahagún continued: [180](#)

And when these things happened, Quetzalcóatl was now troubled and saddened, and thereupon was minded that he should go that he should abandon his city of Tula. Thereupon he made ready. It is said that he had everything burned...

Ixtlilxóchitl said: [181](#)

...seeing the little headway that he was making with his doctrine, he returned by way of the same part whence he had come...

Mendieta and Durán blamed Tezcatlipoca, a malevolent god. In the words of Mendieta: [182](#)

More toward the end, being more powerful, he (Tezcatlipoca) expelled him (Quetzalcóatl) from there, and some of his devout followers went with him toward the sea ...

And Durán narrated: 183

Against Topiltzin (Quetzalcóatl) and against his disciples a great persecution was raised, and I heard it affirmed that war was waged against them, for the number of people who had taken the law (of Topiltzin) and who followed the preaching of this saintly man was many.

The leader of this persecution, according to what they say, was Tezcatlipoca, who, pretending to be heaven-sent for that purpose, pretended also to perform miracles, gathering disciples and malignant people to molest those men of the good life and to banish them from the land, not allowing them to make a seat (of government) in any settlement, compelling them (to go) here and there, until he (Topiltzin) came to make his seat (of government) in Tula, where he reposed for some time and years, until they returned there to pursue them.

Finally, being already tired of so much persecution, they determined to give away to the ire of their persecutors and to go away. Thus determined, Topiltzin commanded the people of Tula or all of his people to gather; and thanking them for the lodging which they had provided, he bade farewell to them.

And those of Tula asking him the cause of this going because of regretting to see him go, he responded to them that the cause was the persecutions of these malicious people; and making them a long sermon, he prophesied the coming of foreign people, that they would arrive in this land from the part of the east with a strange dress of different colors, clothed from head to foot and with covers on their heads, and that God would have sent that punishment in payment for the bad treatment which they had given him and the affront which they had flung at him, with which punishment small and large would perish, not being able to escape the hands of those, his sons, who had come to destroy them even though they would place themselves in caves and in the caverns of the land, and there they would take them and there they would go to pursue and kill these people.

Then these peoples painted in their writings that (which) the Papa prophesied to them so that they would remember them and would await the event, as afterwards they saw it accomplished in the coming of the Spaniards.

Also he said to them that they would not see the coming of those people, nor their sons, nor their grandsons, but their fourth or fifth generation: "These have to be your lords, and you have to serve them, and they have to mistreat and banish you from your lands, as you have done me." And turning to his disciples and many other people who followed him crying he said to them: "Yea, brothers! Let us leave where they do not want us, and let us go where we can have more rest."

And thus Topiltzin began to travel, passing through almost all the settlements of the land, giving each hill and place its name, appropriate to the form and shape of the hill, many people following him from each settlement. And he took the way toward the sea ...

The *Anales of Cuauhtitlán* too chronicle the exodus of Quetzalcóatl: [184](#)

... 1-Reed. In this year Quetzalcóatl died. They say no more than he went away to Tlillán Tlapallán (place-of-blackness-place-of-redness) to die there. Immediately the one called Matlacxóchitl was installed and ruled in Tollan. Then it is related how Quetzalcóatl went away ...

The *Anales* then relate the story about how the demons Tezcatlipoca, Ihuimécatl, and Toltécatl induced Quetzalcóatl to imbibe *pulque* and incestuously to love his sister, Quetzalpétlatl.

Still another story is from Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin: [185](#)

And Topiltzin Ácxitl Quetzalcohuatl often engaged in war when he wanted to cause the destruction of the Teotenancas, for much he wanted their god Nauhyoteuhctli, but he never succeeded. And this history of the Teotenancas shows, reveals, he stayed many years there in Teotenanca Cuixcox Temimilolco Yhuipan because they saw Topiltzin Ácxitl Quetzalcohuatl when he was there in Tullam. When he fought them, the Teotenancas also fought in war so that he was never able to conquer them, to subdue them.

Probably the Teotenancas' settlement was Teotenango, now known as Tenango de Arista and formerly called Tenango del Valle, southwest of México City and south of Toluca de Lerdo.

Whatever the details, the ultimate fact seems to be that

Quetzalcóatl lost religiously, politically, and militarily. Some body (probably it was Huémac) chased him from Tula ignominiously to the sea. Quetzalcóatl uttered threats of retribution. He and his disciples eventually reached the coast of Coatzacoalco. To rule his disciples in his stead, Quetzalcóatl appointed a shadow king named Matlaxóchitzin (Lord 10-Flower). Other disciples were Timal, Ihuiqueholli, also known as Mamali, who had accompanied Quetzalcóatl from Yucatán, Ihuitimalli (who might have been the same person as Timal). Ozomatli, and Ceteuctli.

A poignant lament in the Náhuatl language, a fragment of Náhuatl drama, datable c.1560, tells about the exodus of Quetzalcóatl:

186

There was a house in Tollan made of wood. Today only columns in serpent form remain. He went away. Nácxitl Topiltzin left it abandoned.

There to the sound of trumpets Topiltzin is weeping. Already he went away. He is going away to disappear there in Tlapallán. There through Cholollan we are going to pass, close to Poyauhtecatitlán; already we are crossing it; we are going to Acallán.

There to the sound of trumpets Topiltzin is weeping. Already he went away. He is going to disappear there in Tlapallán.

I come from Nonohuako, I Ihuiqueholli, I the lord Mamali, I myself grieve.

My lord Ihuitimalli went away. He left me, Matlaxóchitl, an orphan.

The mountains are broken. I am beginning to weep. The sands of the sea rise up. I am sad.

My lord Ihuitimalli went away. He left me, Matlaxóchitl, an orphan.

It is Tlapallán where you are awaited. It is the place to which he commands you to go. There is the place of your repose, there only.

Already you have put yourself in motion, my lord Ihuitimalli. He himself commands you to go to Xicalanco and Zacanco.

How will you leave your courtyards and entrances desolate? How will you leave your palaces desolate? Already you left them as orphans in Tollan Nonohuako.

You yourself weep for them, Lord Timal.

How will you leave your courtyards and entrances desolate? How will you leave your palaces desolate? Already you left them as orphans in Tollan Nonohualco.

In wood, in stone, you left yourself engraved. And there in Tollan we are going to cry.

Nácxitl Topiltzin, your renown will never be extinguished, for your vassals will weep for it.

Only the house of turquoises remains standing there, the house of serpents which you left erect. And there in Tollan we are going to cry...

Sahagún too chronicled the hegira of Quetzalcóatl: [187](#)

Finally they were persuaded and convinced by Quetzalcóatl to leave the settlement of Tulla, and thus they left there by his command although they already were settled there a long time and had made beautiful and sumptuous houses. (They left) their temple and their palaces, which had been built with great care in the settlement of Tulla.

(They departed) from all parts and places where they were scattered and settled and very rooted, with many riches that they had. At least, they had to go away from there, leaving their houses, their land, their settlement, and their riches; and since they could not carry all of them along, they left many of them behind, certainly not without admiration of their beauty and design.

And thus, believing and obeying that which Quetzalcóatl had commanded them, they had to bring their women, children, sick, and aged along with work (effort). There was no one who did not want to obey him, for they all moved themselves which (when) he left the settlement of Tulla in order to go away to the region which they called Tlapallán, where Quetzalcóatl never more appeared.

Torquemada was more blunt: [188](#)

... he ran; and leaving the kingdom, he went toward the sea, pretending that the sun was calling him to another part of the sea by the border of the east; but he promised to return, with great might to revenge his injuries and to redeem his people from the wrongs and tyrannies ...

In his welcoming address to Hernán Cortés in 1519, quoted by António de Solís in his *Historia de la conquista de México* Motecuhzoma said that Quetzalcóatl "left the regions to conquer new lands toward the part of the east and he promised that (with) passing time his descendants would come to moderate our laws or to straighten out our

government." [189](#) Mendieta commented in 1596: [190](#)

Afterwards he went toward the coast of Guazacoalco, where he disappeared...he returned by the route by which he had come, taking with him four important virtuous youths of the same city; and from Guazacoalco, a province one hundred leagues from there toward the sea, he sent them back; and among the doctrines that he gave them was that they should regard as certain that in future times there would come, by way of the sea where the sun leaves, some white men, with long beards like him, and that they would be lords of those lands and those were his brothers.

The Indians always waited for the prophecy to come true; and when they saw the Christians coming, they called them gods, sons and brothers of Quetzalcóatl...

In 1670 Miguel de Quetzalmazatzin narrated: [191](#)

And that great lord Topiltzin Ácxitl Quetzalcóatl, notwithstanding that the grandiose city of Tollan having been destroyed, neither was frightened nor abandoned the same settlement but...he remained in it during (the last) eleven years with those who had stayed together with him, his Tultecano vassals.

Eleven years (having) passed, he prepared at last to withdraw in defeat, going toward the direction by where the sun leaves, where he had his settlements, the settlements which worshipped Tonatiuh, the country called Tlapallán. There he traveled, called by Tonatiuh, the sun.

Ixtlilxóchitl said: [192](#)

... he returned by way of the same part whence he had come, which was by way of the east, disappearing by way of the coast of Coatzacoalco; and at the time he was bidding farewell to these peoples, he said to them that in future times, in a year that would be called *ce acatl* (1-Reed), he would return and then his doctrine would be received, that his sons would be lords and possess the land, and that they and their descendants would endure many calamities and persecutions ...

Hernando Alvarado Tezozómoc in his *Crónica mexicana* written in 1598 quoted Tzoncoztli to the effect that Quetzalcóatl and "Ceteuctli, whom Quetzalcóatl brought with him... and Matlacxóchitl, Ozomatli,

and Timal who were the greatest necromancers of the world in Tula... (went) to die in Tlapalan, over the sea.." 193 And speaking to Tlilancalqui, Motecuhzoma, quoted by Tezozómoc, added: 194

...the old men of Tolan regard as very certain that their god Quetzalcóatl left them, that he had to return to Tolan to reign... and that when he went away ... to see the other god, which place where he went was called Tlapallán...

Quetzalcóatl left Coatzacoalco in a ship. Sahagún wrote in Spanish that Quetzalcóatl's disciples constructed the ship for him: 195

Thus arriving at the shore of the sea, he ordered (them) to make a raft made of snakes that are called *coatlapechtli*, and he entered it and seated himself as in a canoe; and thus he went navigating on the sea; and it is not known how and in what manner he arrived at Tlapallán.

In Náhuatl, Sahagún said: 196

...then he went to reach the sea coast. There upon he fashioned a *coatlapechtli*. When he had arranged (it), there he placed himself, as if it were a boat. Then he set off going across the sea. No one knows how he came to arrive there at Tlapallán.

In Náhuatl, *coatlapechtli* means "snake raft" or "snake bier" and was a cremation ship that resembled a snake. Further, Durán recorded: 197

And ... Topiltzin ... took the way toward the sea, and there he opened, with only his word, a great mountain, and he inserted himself through there. Others say that he threw his robe over the sea and that he made a sign with his hand over (it) and he seated himself over it, and (being) seated he began to travel through the water and never more did they see him.

Tlapallán is the Náhuatl *tlapalli* meaning "red" or "redness" and the suffix *-tlán* signifying "place of." Hence, Tlapallán is "place of red" or "place of redness," perhaps translatable as "place of burning" or "land of the sunrise" or "land of the east." The peninsula of Yucatán, the islands of the Caribbean Sea, Africa, and Europe are all lands to the east of Coatzacoalco. Although some scholars believe that Quetzalcóatl fled from Tula to Yucatán, the more persuasive

conclusion based on the evidence is that Quetzalcóatl sailed eastward onto the Atlantic Ocean - or that his disciples cremated him or he cremated himself.

The demise of Quetzalcóatl perhaps is in the words of Ixtlilxóchitl: [198](#)

A few days after his departure from there (Coatzacoalco), there occurred the destruction and devastation of the third age of the world; and then that building and tower which was in the city of Cholula, which was like a second tower of Babel, and which these people constructed with almost the same design (as Babel), was destroyed by the wind.

And afterwards, those who escaped from the desolation of the third age built in the ruins of it a temple to Quetzalcóatl, whom they worshipped as god of the air, the air having been the cause of their destruction, it being their understanding that this calamity was sent by his hand.

If so, a few days after Quetzalcóatl embarked from Coatzacoalco, a mighty hurricane struck the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf Coast of México. This hurricane might have wrecked or sunk Quetzalcóatl's ship, and the aged Quetzalcóatl and his crew might have all drowned.

The sixteenth century authors Ixtlilxóchitl, [199](#) Las Casas, [200](#) Mendieta, [201](#) and Torquemada [202](#) all recorded the legend that Quetzalcóatl departed from the Coast of Coatzacoalco.

Coatzacoalco, sometimes spelled "Coatzacoalcos," is the region in México near the mouth of the Coatzacoalco River. This river flows north into the Bay of Campeche and the Gulf of México at the Isthmus of Tehuantepec.

In the Náhuatl language, *coatzacoalco* is *coatl* + *tzacualli* + *co*. *Coatl* means "serpent," *tzacualli* means "covered place, hiding place, enclosure" or "pyramid, tower, hill, mountain," and *co* means "in, inside, place."

Landa narrated that Kulkucán, whom he identified as Quetzalcóatl, departed from Yucatán and that "on the way he stopped in Champotón ... and built *in the sea* a good building like that of Chichenizá" [203](#) in other words, a pyramid like the Temple of Kulkucán at Chichén Itzá in Yucatán. Durán recounted that Quetzalcóatl "took the way toward the sea, and there he opened, with only his word, a great mountain, and he inserted (put) himself through there (the mountain)." [204](#)

Durán related also that when a Spanish ship arrived along the Gulf Coast of México a chief named Teuctlamacazqui, an official

named Pinotl, who was governor of Cuertlaxtlán, and a commoner all reported to Motecuhzoma that they had seen a round hill moving on the water and that inside it were people. [205](#) Hernando Alvarado Tezozómoc in his *Crónica mexicana* told that a commoner thus announced the arrival of Grijalva's fleet: "I arrived at the shore of the great sea, and I saw a mountain range or large hill floating in the midst of the sea." Tezozómoc added that the attendants of Cuitlalpitoc, a spy dispatched by Motecuhzoma to gather intelligence about the phenomenon of the floating hill, informed Cuitlalpitoc that they had seen "two towers or small hills moving along the top of the sea" and that Cuitlalpitoc himself later told Motecuhzoma that strange people in a small canoe "arrived at their two very great towers on the sea and climbed up into them." [206](#)

Toribio de Benevente (Motolinía) explained that the Indians thought Cortés "was bringing his *teucallis* over the sea," [207](#) and Mendieta said that the Indians believed Cortés brought temples of gods over the sea." [208](#) *Teocalli* is *teotl* (god) + *calli* (house) in Náhuatl and means "temple," "pyramid." or "godhouse."

Francisco López de Gómara wrote that "of the ships they said that the god Quetzalcóatl was coming with his temples on his shoulders," alluding to the explanation by Motecuhzoma's emissary Tendile (Teuhtlilli). and that the coast-dwelling Totonacas sent a delegation to see "what people came in those *teucallis*, which is to say temples." [209](#) Bartolomé de las Casas in his *Apologética historia* said than "when they saw the sailing ships of the Spaniards they said that already their god Quetzalcóatl was returning and that he was bringing by sea the temples in which he had to dwell." [210](#)

Large sailing ships being a strange sight to the peoples of Mesoamerica, they likened them to pyramids, towers, temples, mountains, or hills that floated on the water. The meaning of the toponym Coatzacoalco thus becomes clear: *coatzacoalco* signifies "place of the (feathered) serpent being enclosed inside a pyramid or hill," and it refers to the departure or burning of Quetzalcóatl in a sailing ship.

Another legend that persisted in México is that Quetzalcóatl cremated himself or his supporters burned him or his corpse.

As related by Sahagún in his Náhuatl text: [211](#)

... Those called Nahua ... are the ones who speak the Náhuatl language... These called them selves sedentary Chichimecas, that is to say, Tultecas. It is said these caused the Tultecas to disperse when they went away, when Topiltzin Quetzalcóatl entered the water, when he went to stay in Tlapalla, the place of burning.

More toward the end, being more powerful, he (Tezcatlipoca) expelled him (Quetzalcóatl) from there, and some of his devout followers went with him toward the sea, which place they call Tlillapa or Tizapan; and there he died and they burned his body. From that time, he left them the custom of burning the bodies of their dead lords.

The *Anales de Cuauhtitlán* detail the flight and demise of Quetzalcóatl thus: 213

Immediately Quetzalcóatl went away afoot. He called all his pages and cried with them. Then they went away to Tlillan Tlapallán, the place of burning. He went seeing and experimenting everywhere; no place pleased him. And having arrived where he was going, he again became sad and cried.

They say that in this year 1-Reed, having arrived at the edge of the divine water, he stopped, cried, collected his ornaments, adorned his insignia of feathers and green mask, etc.

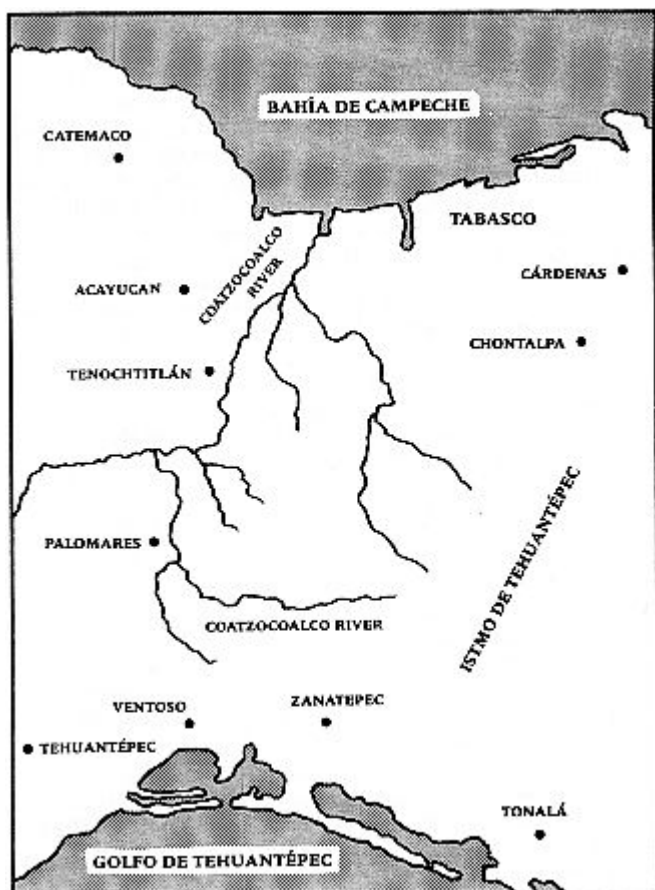
Then that he was attired, he started a fire and burned himself; for that (reason), the place where Quetzalcóatl went to burn himself is called the place of burning. They say that when he burned himself, immediately his ashes rose up, and all the precious birds - the *tlauhquéchol*, the *xiuhtótl*, the *tzinizcam*, the parrots *tozneme*, *allome*, and *cochome* and so many other: fair birds, which soar and visit the sky - appeared to see them.

The place where Quetzalcóatl went to be burned or after being burned, Tlillapan or Tlillapa, is the Náhuatl *tilli* meaning "color" or "black" plus *pán* meaning "in." *Tizapán* connotes a "whiteness" like gypsum, plaster, dust, powder, or ashes, like cremated bones, the Náhuatl being *tizatl* plus *atl* plus *pán*. *Tizaapán* means "in water of gypsum" or "in water of plaster." These allusions apparently are to charcoal and ashes or to the black sky and the white Milky Way or to cremated bones resembling gypsum. Poctlán, mentioned as the site of Quetzalcóatl's suicide by Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin, is "place of smoke." 214

Both sets of legends - Quetzalcóatl's departure in a ship and his cremation - might be the truth: that Quetzalcóatl departed in the style of a Norse king by the cremation of himself, his ship, his goods, and his treasures and maybe also some of his disciples; for as Hernando Alvarado Tezozómoc wrote in 1598:

(The image Tzoncoztli spoke to Motecuhzoma): "(L)ook, lord, at that which is concerned with Ceteuctli, who was an important lord, this Ceteucli, whom Quetzalcóatl brought with him. Did they not go to die in Tlapallán, over the sea to the sky above, (they) and their chiefs called Matlacxóchitl, Ozomatli, and Timal, who were the greatest necromancers in the world in Tula, and in the end did they not come to die because their king and lord carried them away; nor are they now in the world?"

Now perhaps some lucky archaeologist who searches near the present or former mouth of the Coatzacoalco River on its western bank will find a ship cremation mound. It would be a hillock, probably not far from the shoreline perhaps resembling the earthen La Venta pyramid - the ship cremation grave of Quetzalcóatl, who preached, fought, and lost in México, whose god forsook him, and who died in a ship cremation like a Norse earl, in a foreign land, his demise never told to his kith in whatever country was his home before Yucatán and México, an interloper defeated and expelled by the Nahuas of México.



Map of Coatzacoalco River region

Chapter V. THE QUETZALCÓATL PHENOMENON

The rattlesnake quetzalcóatl... is given the name quetzalcóatl because the flesh on its back is just like precious feathers. Also the base of the feathers is blackish, and that which forms its shaft is just like the shaft of a quetzal feather, blackish. These protrude along its spine. And what forms the quill is quite green. It lies along its side as if heaped up or colored. And on its neck they are like *trogon* feathers, and its tail, its rattles are like *cotinga* feathers; and on its belly they are quite chili-red ...

More than one Quetzalcóatl existed.

Grijalva was Quetzalcóatl. Cortés was Quetzalcóatl.²¹⁵ Emperor Maximilian of México was Quetzalcóatl.²¹⁶ Some Nahua priests bore the sacerdotal title of quetzalcóatl.²¹⁷ The Book of *Chilam Balam of Tizimín* mentions as Ah Nacxit Kukucán in a *katun* 8-Ahau,²¹⁸ who was not the Kulkucán in a *katun* 4-Ahau. The Book of *Chilam Balam of Chumayel* declares that in a *katun* 4-Ahau Kulkucán came for the second time ²¹⁹ and the Book of *Chilam Balam of Tizimín* that in a *katun* 4-Ahau he came for the fourth time.²²⁰ The first Kulkucán was the one who came to Yucatán before the Itzás, and the second was the one who came after the Itzás.²²¹ The *Popul Vuh* mentions an early Gucamatz (feathered serpent), a late Gucamatz, and a late Nacxit.²²² The *Codex Telleriano-Remensis* records that México had two Quetzalcóatls two who were great Quetzalcóatls - before Cortés.²²³ The *Leyenda de las soles*²²⁴ tells about an early Quetzalcóatl. who was a hero seeking the bones of his father and bringing corn to the world, and a late Ce Acatl who conquered, went to Tlapallán, and burned himself and whose successor in Tollan was Huémac.

Because two or more Quetzalcóatls existed, the legends about them are in layers confused by the *rapporteurs* and *raconteurs* in subsequent centuries. The first great Quetzalcóatl was a god in the sky and a founder of civilization. The persecutor of the first great Quetzalcóatl was a god, Tezcatlipoca, and the persecutor of the second great Quetzalcóatl was a man, Huémac. The second great Quetzalcóatl in the tenth and eleventh centuries, like Cortés in the sixteenth century, was the fortuitous heir to the mystique of the prior, deified Quetzalcóatl. The second great Quetzalcóatl promoted agriculture, metallurgy, and the calendar in México, skills from Yucatán or Tabasco. To the Mayas and the Nahuas, time was cyclical, not linear,

and to them the reoccurrence of Quetzalcóatl was a certainty. The Mayas expected him in a *katur* 4-Ahau or 8-Ahau and the Nahuas in a *xihuitl* 1-Acatl.

Some confirmation of the first Quetzalcóatl is in the constellations. The *Historia de los mexicanos por sus pinturas* says that Tezcatlipoca was the constellation Ursa Major, the Great Bear.²²⁵ In the sky, the Great Bear appears to be chasing the serpent shaped constellation Draco, the Dragon. To stargazers, the Great Bear is visible February through June in the northern hemisphere and the Dragon late May to early November. February through June, when the Great Bear is discernible, the viewer from the northern hemisphere sees also Leo Minor, which is Little Lion, and Leo, which is Lion, near the Great Bear, and in January through May sees the Lynx, also near the Great Bear. Gerónimo de Mendieta narrated that Tezcatlipoca climbed down from the sky on a rope made from spider web, turned himself into a tiger (ocelot, jaguar), caused the populace to flee, and then pursued Quetzalcóatl.²²⁶

The name "feathered snake" suggests also that the first great Quetzalcóatl was an elongated object in the sky perhaps a comet, for many comets look befeathered. The *Leyenda de los soles* says that the god Mixcóatl, "cloud snake," was Quetzalcóatl's father.²²⁷ This assertion might imply that a feathered snake emerged from a serpent-shaped "cloud" in the heavens. The "cloud" was not the Milky Way; the Milky Way was Citlallicue, "Star Skirt." Tezcatlipoca, whose name means "sparking smoking mirror," possibly was an object that followed Quetzalcóatl in the sky and somehow vanquished him.²²⁸

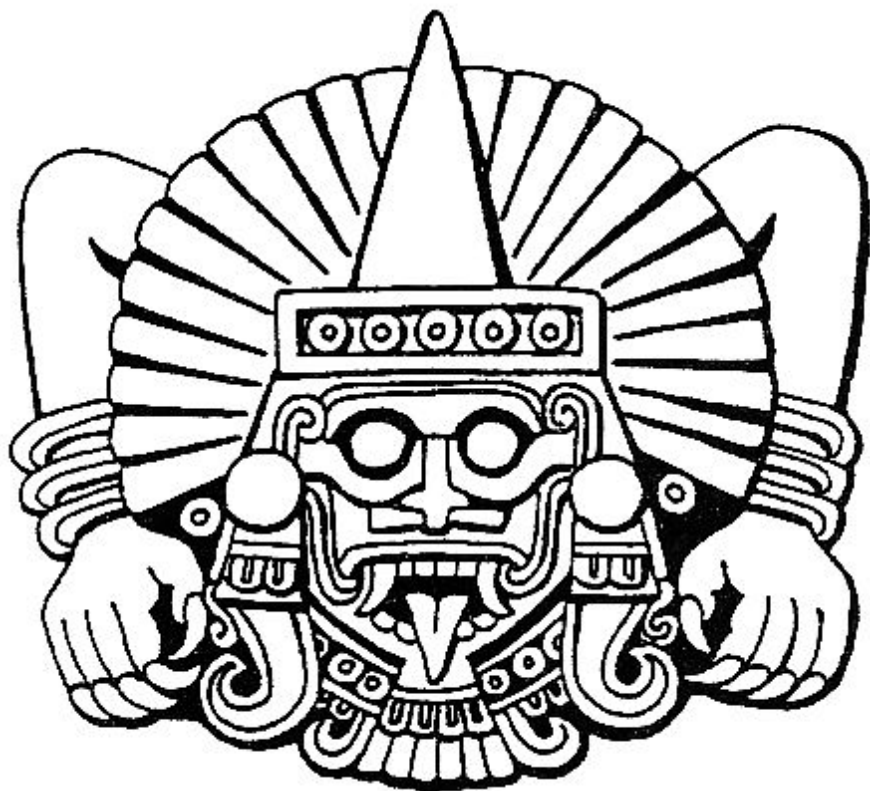
Topiltzin is an honorific meaning "our lord prince" or "our lord son." Like *quetzalcóatl*, *topiltzin* was a sacerdotal title, a priestly rank.²²⁹ Two sources, the *Relación de la genealogía y linaje de los señores que han señoreado esta tierra de Nueva España* ²³⁰ and the *Origen de los mexicanos*,²³¹ both published in 1891 by Joaquín García Icazbalceta in Volume III of his *Nueva colección de documentos para la historia de México*, say that a Topiltzin was a son of Totepeuh, that this Topiltzin went to Tlapalla, where he died, and that the successor to this Topiltzin was Huémac. In oral histories remembered from generation to generation, successors often become sons with the passing of time. If this Topiltzin was the same person as Quetzalcóatl, as indeed the context indicates, the anonymous recorders of these two tale or the anonymous tellers misunderstood the successor Totepeuh to be a son of Totepeuh, an error easily made since *pilli* means both "prince" and "son" in Náhuatl.

The *Anales de Cuauhtitlán*,²³² the *Histoyre du Mechique*,²³³ and Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahi Quauhthlehuantzin's

Memorial breve acerca de la fundación de ciudad de Culhuacán 234 say that a phantom king named Matlaxóchitl was the second great Quetzalcóatl's immediate successor and Hernando Alvarado Tezozómoc's *Crónica mexicana* 235 and the *Cantares mexicanos* 236 that Matlaxóchitl accompanied the second great Quetzalcóatl when he fled. Perhaps Matlaxóchitl ruled briefly and died by the wrath of Huémac.

Strangely, Huémac had an experience like the second Quetzalcóatl's the *Anales de Cuauhtitlán*, 237 the *Leyenda de las soles*, 238 the *Historia tolteca-chichimeca*, 239 the *Anales toltecas*, 240 Hernando Alvarado Tezozómoc's *Crónica mexicana*, 241 and Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin's *Memorial breve acerca de la fundación de la ciudad de Culhuacán* 242 agree that Huémac went to Cinalco. Etymologically, Cinalco in Náhuatl is *cintli* + *acalli* + *co*- "corn" + "boat" + "inside" - and signified "inside the corn(-provisioned) boat." Some commentators translate Cinalco as "inside the corn house," *cintli* + *calli* + *co*.

Durán, 243 Tezozómoc, 244 and others thought Cinalco was a cave - perhaps it was a cave in the memories of the Nahuas because a ship is hollow like a cave. Two sources - Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin's *Memorial breve acerca de la fundación de la ciudad de Culhuacán* 245 and the *Relación de la genealogía y linaje de las señores que han señoreado esta tierra de Nueva España* 246 - link Huémac and Cinalco to Chapultépec, a rocky hill in México City, perhaps because this ship in Nahua memories was like a hill. No cave exists in the hill called Chapultépec in México City, but perhaps another Chapultépec (grasshopper hill) existed. The story of Huémac's going to Cinalco, "inside the corn-provisioned boat," is the story of his chasing Quetzalcóatl to Coatزالcoalco "snake inside a ship." By Motecuhzoma's time, however, Cinalco was an unlocated cave in the Valley of México where Montecuhzoma magically but vainly petitioned Huémac to expel Quetzalcóatl Cortés from México. (Huémac refused and told Montecuhzoma to accept his fate.) After going to Cinalco, Huémac removed his people to Culhuacán and died at Oztotepán 247 or Chapultépec 248 if not Cinalco.



EVENING STAR

A stone relief from Tepetzintla portrays the deified Quetzalcóatl as Venus-the evening star. (After Covarrubias, 1957: Fig. 87)

Chapter VI. THE DATES OF QUETZALCÓATL

Diego de Landa's Yucatec Maya informants in 1566 knew that Kukulcán, whom they identified as Quetzalcóatl, "came (to Yucatán) from the west"; but they differed among themselves "whether he came before or after the Itzá or with them." ²⁴⁹ The *Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel* and the *Book of Chilam Balam of Tizimín*, both eighteenth century Yucatec Maya documents derived from older manuscripts, indicate that Kukulcán came to Chichén Itzá, Yucatán, in a "*katun* 4-Ahau."²⁵⁰

In the Maya calendar, a *katun* 4-Ahau occurred approximately every 256¼ years. A *katun* was 20 *tun*, and each *tun* had 360 days. Thus a *katun* was 7200 days or 19.71 years. The expression *katun* 4-Ahau means that the last day of the *katun* was a day of the Maya calendar called 4-Ahau. A *katun* named 4-Ahau fell on these dates in the Gregorian calendar:

August 27, 455 A.D. to May 13, 475 A.D.

December 4, 711 A.D. to August 20, 731 A.D.

March 10, 968 A.D. to November 25, 987 A.D.

June 16, 1224 A.D. to March 2, 1244 A.D.

September 21, 1480 A.D. to June 9, 1500 A.D.²⁵¹

One of these *katuns* 4-Ahau marked the arrival of Kukulcán Quetzalcóatl in Yucatán.

Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxóchitl in the early seventeenth century wrote:

... there arrived in this land (of México) a man whom some called Quetzalcóatl ... this event happened some years after the incarnation of Christ our lord.²⁵²

Cristobal Sanchez,²⁵³ Juan de Paredes,²⁵⁴ Yñigo Nieto,²⁵⁵ and Juan de la Cueva Santillán ²⁵⁶ in 1581 noted that the first settlers of Chichén Itzá were not idolators until Kukulcán, "a Mexican captain, entered these parts." And Pedro García also in 1581, added: "It has not been a thousand years that they worshipped idols."²⁵⁷ Thus these five

sources, construed together, suggest a date of 581 A.D. at the earliest. Pedro de Santillána in 1581 recorded:

...around 800 years ago ... a captain who was called Quetzalquat (Quetzalcóatl)... introduced idolatry .. in this land (of Yucatán),²⁵⁸

Thus Santillána proposed a date of c.781 A.D.

Juan de Torquemada in 1615 narrated that the settlement of Tula in México began "seven hundred years after the incarnation of the son of God;" the second king, ruled for 50 years; that Huémac was the third king; and the Huémac and Quetzalcóatl were contemporaries.²⁵⁹ Accordingly, Torquemada preferred a date of c.800-850 A.D.

The anonymous author of the *Anales de Cuauhtitlán*, who wrote in 1570 in the Náhuatl language, indicated a date of 843 A.D. for Quetzalcóatl's arrival in Tula and a date of 895 A.D. for his departure.²⁶⁰

Diego de Landa in 1566 recounted that after being more than 500 years in Mayapán from the time of its foundation by Kukulcán the Cocom dynasty abandoned Mayapán and that this event occurred 120 or 125 years before the date when Landa wrote his treatise.²⁶¹ In this fashion, Landa advocated a date of c.946 A.D. or c.941 A.D. for Quetzalcóatl's migration from Chichén Itzá to Mayapán.

António de Herrera y Tordesillas in 1601-1615 asserted that the foundation of the city of Mayapán by Kukulcán occurred 570 years "before the Castilians arrived in Yucatán." ²⁶² The first Spaniards known for certain to have been in Yucatán were members of the Pedro Valdivia crew shipwrecked in 1511. Francisco Hernández de Córdoba came in 1517, Juan de Grijalva in 1518, Hernán Cortés in 1519, Francisco de Montejo the Elder in 1527-1528 and 1531-1535, and Francisco de Montejo the Younger in 1540-1546. Herrera's dates for the advent of Kukulcán in Yucatán, therefore, would be c.941-976 A.D.

Miguel de Quetzalmazatzin, a Christian Nahua nobleman, in 1670 said that the destruction of Tula happened "in a year 1-Reed, 1031." ²⁶³

Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin in 1612 stated that Quetzalcóatl appeared at Tula in México in "III. *tochtli xihuitl* 1002 años" (the year 4-Rabbit, 1002 A.D.) and that he left in "I. *ce acatl xihuitl* 1051. años" (the year 1-Reed, 1051 A.D.)²⁶⁴

The *Popul Vuh*, a Quiché chronicle completed c.1554-1558, records that the Quiché kings who journeyed from the Guatemalan highlands to the east for investiture by Naxcit Kukulcán-Quetzalcóatl

were the second generation of the royal lineage and that the twelfth generation died on March 7, 1524. ²⁶⁵ If 40 years per generation be allowed, as suggested by the historian Francisco Ximénez,²⁶⁶ Naxcit-Kukulcán-Quetzalcoatl was in Yucatán c.1084-1124 A.D.

Forty years per generation is not an unreasonable estimate in the circumstances. For as explained by Adrián Recinos:²⁶⁷

...Ximénez counted the duration of each generation of kings as forty years. This calculation, at rust glance, seems somewhat high, but...the *Popul Vuh* presents as a single generation not only the ruling monarch or Ahau Ahpop, but also his assistant the Ahpop Camhá, who was destined to succeed him and who exercised the command until he died; the Ahpop Camhá, was usually the oldest son of the monarch and for that reason much younger than the Ahpop himself, so that the period of government of forty years mentioned twenty years for each one does not seem excessive...

Even so, Ximénez and Recinos were perhaps too conservative.

In the *Popul Vuh* ²⁶⁸, the *Título de los señores de Tetonicapán*,²⁶⁹ and the *Annals of the Cakchiquels*,²⁷⁰ the oligarchs who ruled the Quichés and the Cakchiquels in the sixteenth century proudly traced their origin to Tula in México. That being so, they probably had adopted the concept of kingship that once prevailed in Tula, aptly described by the Nahua historian Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxóchitl:

These Tultecas had an order that their kings did not have to govern more than fifty-two years, which was their *xiuhtlapilli*;²⁷¹ and then (when) the fifty-two years (were) completed the successor began to govern although his father was alive; and if he died before, the Republic governed until fifty-two rears were completed.²⁷²

Thus the tenth generation of the Quiché kings since the investiture by Quetzalcóatl having died on March 7, 1524 and 52 years per generation being allowed (the tenth generation probably had not completed their allotted 52 years when they died in 1524), Kukulcán-Quetzalcóatl was in Yucatán c.952-1004 A.D. Consequently, the *Popul Vuh* points to a date of c.952 A.D. at the earliest if each generation of Quiché kings was 52 years and to a date of c.1124 A.D. at the latest if each generation of Quiché kings was 40 years.

In 1565 Bernardino de Sahagún wrote in Náhuatl that "Tullan

(Tula) was destroyed...in one thousand, one hundred and ten,"²⁷³ and in his Spanish companion text he noted that "since the destruction of Tulia (Tula) until this year of 1571, 1890 years have passed or a very little less."²⁷⁴ In 1575 he recorded that "Tula was destroyed a thousand years or so ago."²⁷⁵

Motecuhzoma, quoted by Hernando Alvarado Tezozómoc, in 1519 declared that it had been "more than three hundred years since Quetzalcóatl went away to the sky,"²⁷⁶ thus suggesting a date of 1219 A.D. at the latest. And Motecuhzoma, quoted by Bernardino de Sahagún, in 1519 said also that Quetzalcóatl's stay in México antedated the reign of Itzcóatl, who ruled c.1427 to c.1440 A.D.²⁷⁷

Some of these proposed dates can be readily eliminated or qualified. Ixtlilxóchitl knew only that Quetzalcóatl arrived in México during the Christian era. The c.581 A.D. of Sánchez, Paredes, Nieto, Cueva Santillán, and García, the c. 781 A.D. of Santillána, the c.800-850 A.D. of Torquemada, the c.946 A.D. or c.941 A.D. of Landa, the c.941-976 A.D. of Herrera y Tordesillas, and the c.1219 A.D. and the c.1427 A.D. of Motecuhzoma are only guesses. The *Popul Vuh* dates stem from an oral genealogy spanning more than four centuries. Such genealogies are often correct in their generalities but imprecise in their specifics; omission of generations and confusion of names in oral genealogies are not uncommon occurrences. Sahagún's three dates for the destruction of Tula - 315 B.C., 575 A.D., and 1110 A.D. Show that his informants disagreed.

Although not attempting the Julian equivalents, the anonymous author of the *Anales de Cuauhtitlán* in 1570 did state Nahua dates. The *Anales de Cuauhtitlán* have an entry for each year from the Nahua year *ce acatl* (1-Reed) in 635 A.D. to the Nahua year *ce acatl* in 1519 A.D. Nahua dates are cyclical; a year known as *ce acatl* recurred every 52 years. Thus in the Nahua calendar of Tenochtitlan, a year *ce acatl* fell in the Julian-Gregorian years 635, 687, 739, 791, 843, 895, 947, 999, 1051, 1103, 1155, 1207, 1259, 1311, 1363, 1415, 1467, and 1519 A.D. A Nahua date of *ce acatl* could have been any one of these Christian years. One can arrive at the Christian year 843 A.D. from the *Anales* as the year of Quetzalcóatl's arrival in Tula only by starting from the point where the *Anales* say, "*Ce acatl*. In this year ... the Spaniards arrived...they came the first time in the year of one thousand five hundred nineteen of 1519 (*sic*)," and reading the *Anales* and counting backward in time, year by year and cycle by cycle, to the point where the *Anales* declare, "*Ce acatl*. It is said that in this year Quetzalcóatl was born, who for that (reason) was called Topiltzin and priest Ce Acatl Quetzalcohuatl."

Whether the author of the *Anales de Cuauhtitlán* placed the advent of Quetzalcóatl in the correct sequence is problematical. The

author of the *Anales* obtained his information apparently from not only the book or books painted by the Nahuas in Cuauhtitlán but also from accounts found in Texcoco and other places. Such collation is difficult, the reiteration of cycles is confusing, and all Nahua calendars were not the same. If the *Anales* are accurate, the arrival of Quetzalcóatl in a year *ce acatl* and his departure exactly 52 years later in the next year *ce acatl* is an amazing coincidence, almost too good to be true. Further; the *Anales* merely list some Nahua years by name without any accompanying historical narrative, and duplications and omissions are distinct possibilities. Even so, the *Anales* are formidable authority for 843 A.D. as the date of Quetzalcóatl's arrival in Tula.

If the Kukulcán-Quetzalcóatl who arrived in Yucatán during a *katun* 4-Ahau was the same Quetzalcóatl who arrived at Tula, the Julian date of 843 A.D. in the *Anales de Cuauhtitlán* is impossible; for the preceding *katun* 4-Ahau ended on the Gregorian date of August 20, 731 A.D., 112 years before 843 A.D., and the next *katun* 4-Ahau began on the Gregorian date of March 10, 968 A.D., 125 years after 843 A.D. Kukulcán Quetzalcóatl could not have lived so long. Therefore, either the Kukulcán of Yucatán and the Quetzalcóatl of Tula were different people, or the date of 843 A.D. in the *Anales de Cuauhtitlán* is wrong, or the *katun* 4-Ahau date in the *Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel* and in the *Book of Chilam Balam of Tizimín* is incorrect, or the Goodman-Martínez Hernández-Thompson correlation of Maya-Gregorian dates is erroneous. If it be assumed that Kukulcán and Quetzalcóatl were the same man, as Diego de Landa, Juan de Torquemada, and authors of the *Relaciones de Yucatán* stated, then only Domingo de San Antón Muñoz Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin's dates are consistent and feasible. If one reads the *Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel*, the *Book of Chilam Balam of Tizimín*, Bartolomé de las Casas, Gerónimo de Mendieta, and Domingo de San Antón Muñoz Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin together, only the following chronology coheres:

c.987 A.D. (*katun* 4-Ahau) Kukulcán-Quetzalcóatl arrives at Champotón in Yucatán.

1002 A.D. (4-*Tochtli*) Quetzalcóatl-Kukulcán arrives at Tula (or Tulancingo).

1051 A.D. (1-*Acatl*) Quetzalcóatl leaves Tula.

Domingo de San Antón Muñoz Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin, furthermore, stated an exact year for Quetzalcóatl's arrival in Tula, and he extrapolated this date of 1002 A.D. from the written histories of the Nahuas in México. Whereas the dates in most of the other sources are approximations, Domingo de San Antón Muñón

Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin's statements are definite, unequivocal, and detailed.

Nigel Davies,²⁷⁸ a historian, endeavored to reconcile the conflicting regnal dates in the México sources. He first established the reign of Coxcox at Culhuacán as 1309-1327 and the arrival of the Aztec as at Chaupultépec as 1319. He then counted backward, reign by reign, date by date, to 1179 as the date of Quetzalcóatl's debacle, believing that Tula though burnt never fell. Since the dates in the sources differ by five years or more for the same event, he used mean dates. He astutely noted five or more diverse Nahua calendars employed in the sources. The authors of the sources relied on different pictographic manuscripts produced in different Nahua settlements, and accordingly their dates varied because the calendars varied.

The *Origen de los mexicanos*, an anonymous late sixteenth century account published by Joaquín García Icazbalceta in Volume III of his *Nueva colección de documentos para la historia de México* in 1891, asserts that 97 rulerless years elapsed at Tula after the death of Topilce (Topitzin or Quetzalcóatl), and the *Relación de la genealogía y linaje de los señores que han señoreado esta tierra de Nueva España*, likewise an anonymous late sixteenth century document published in the same volume by García Icazbalceta, declares that Tula after the departure of Topilci (Topilrzin or Quetzalcóatl) "was without a principal lord for 97 years." The *Historia de los mexicanos por sus pinturas*, likewise published by García Icazbalceta in 1891, mentions a period of nine years when Tula was "without a lord" after the reign of Ce Acatl (Quetzalcóatl). If one subtracts the 97 years from Davies' 1179, the result is the year 1082, which is only 31 years later than the date of 1051 provided by Chimalpahin. The calendar of Tenochtitlán differed from the calendar of Culhuacán by 20 years; thus the year 1-Acatl at Tenochtitlán was 1519 whereas the year 1-Acatl at Culhuacán was 1539. Conversely, the year 1-Acatl for Quetzalmazatzin was 1031, whereas the year 1-Acatl at Tenochtitlán was 1051, a disparity of 20 years.

If one subtracts Quetzalmazatzin's 1031 from 1082, the result is 51 years, approximately one 52-year Nahua cycle. The discrepancy of one year might be due to the fact that some Nahuas counted inclusively and other exclusively. To allow for the extra cycle plus 20 years, both the *Origen de los mexicanos* and the *Relación de la genealogía* postulate that Huémac governed for 72 years after the 97-year interregnum. Patently the authors of these two accounts faced a 169-year gap between the fall of Tula and the rise of Culhuacán and chose to apportion it between an interregnum and Huémac. Domingo de San Antón Muñoz Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin filled it by reiterating the list of kings of Tula as kings of Culhuacán, and a

similar repetition is in the *Anales de Cuauhtitlán*.

All factors considered, the more credible historical sources indicate that Quetzalcóatl's departure from Tula occurred in 1031 (Quetzalmazatzin) or 1051 (Chimalpahin).

Astronomy offers a clue that enables a more precise dating of Quetzalcóatl's ship cremation.

A spectacular event happened in the sky when Quetzalcóatl left Tula. His ship cremation, with the heated air swirling the smoke and ashes skyward, is not enough to explain the memories that persisted five centuries later.

Miguel de Quetzalmazatzin in 1670 said: "Tollan (Tula) ... in a year 1-Reed, 1031 (1051) was destroyed by our Lord God; it was when a star was seen smoking against the sky." [279](#)

Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin in his *Memorial breve acerca de la fundación de la ciudad de Culhuacán* stated as translated from Náhuatl:[280](#)

Year 1-Reed 1051 A.D....(when Topiltzin Áxcitl
Quetzalcohuatl left) one star smoked above the settlement (of)
Tullam, which astonished the Tultecas.

The Náhuatl word *citlalli* or *citlali* is "star"; *citlalim tlamina* is the tail of a comet. Alonso de Molina [281](#) listed *xiuitl* as a "comet which appears as a globe or great blaze," and Rémi Siméon [282](#) had *xiuitl* or *xihuitl* as "comet" and *xiuitl uetzi* as "falling comet." (*Xihuitl* means "year" also.) Siméon noted *citlalim* as "comet" or "star that smokes."

Gerónimo de Mendieta in 1596 said: [283](#) "The soul of Quetzalcóatl turned itself into a star, and such comet or star was the one that sometimes has been seen in this land, and after it have been seen to follow pestilences on the Indians and other calamities."

Bartolomé de las Casas in 1559 wrote:[284](#) "Quetzalcóatl ... when he died... changed himself into that star...which they honored and worshipped."

The *Anales de Cuauhtitlán* relate: [285](#) "According (to what) they say, he went to the sky and entered the sky; the old ones say that he changed himself into the star that leaves at the dawn; thus they say that it appeared when Quetzalcóatl died, that for this (reason) they named him lord of the house and banner of the dawn (Tlahuizcalpanteuctli). "Tlahuizcalpanteuctli is the planet Venus.

The *Histoyre du Mechique* says;[286](#) "From the smoke that left his body they say to have been made a great star called Héspero." Héspero is Venus.

Hernando Alvarado Tezozómoc in 1598 wrote that Quetzalcóatl

"went over the sea to the sky." [287](#)

Diego de Landa in 1566 noted that Kukulcán went "to the sky with the gods." [288](#)

The *Codex Telleriano-Remensis* explains: "...now they call him ...the star Venus." [289](#)

Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxóchitl mentioned "great persecutions from the sky" and "great comets" that accompanied the destruction of Tula. [290](#)

Some comets are periodic. Halley's Comet, known to astronomers as 1910 II Halley, is periodic; it appears every 76.03 years, more or less, the variation in its periodicity being due to perturbations caused by the gravity of Jupiter and other bodies. In 1910 Halley's Comet stretched more than half way across the sky. Halley's Comet was in the sky in 106 A.D. but not in 1051. The comet known to astronomer as Ikey-Seki 1965 VIII, sighted in Japan on September 17, 1965, has a periodicity between 875 and 1040 years and was, therefore, in the sky some time between 925 and 1090 A.D. This bright comet in 1965 had a tail reaching a length of more than 40 degrees.[291](#)

The smoking star of México seems to have been more than a mere comet. The Nahuas recorded comets from time to time - comets that preceded the arrival of Cortés [292](#) and others but no comet ever astounded them as much as the celestial event of c.1051 A.D. Miguel de Quetzalmazatzin said that the star smoked "during 11 years," [293](#) and Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin wrote in Náhuatl [294](#) as now translated from Náhuatl:

... eleven years above smoked one star in the sky...

No known comet has ever remained visible for longer than six and one-half months to unaided human eyes on earth,[295](#) As described by Chimalpahin and Quetzalmazatzin, the smoking star of México unlike a comet apparently was motionless and tailless and was visible longer than a comet would have been. If so, it was a nova or a supernova, not a comet.

The supernova of 1054 A.D.,[296](#) believed by astronomers to have created the Crab Nebula, is a possible explanation. A supernova is a star which explodes catastrophically, with a sudden release of most of its energy. It emits as much energy in one second as the sun in 60 years. William C. Miller,[297](#) an astronomer, thought that this supernova was "probably the brightest object other than the sun ever to have appeared in the sky in the memory of man."

F. R. Stephenson, an astronomer at the Institute of Lunar and Planetary Sciences at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, in his

"Revised Catalogue of Pre-Telescopic Galactic Novae and Supernovae" [298](#) listed a nova seen in 837 that lasted 75 days, a supernova in 1006 that endured "several years," the Crab Nebula supernova in 1054 that persisted two years, and a possible supernova in 1181 that was visible for 185 days. The *Annuaire pour l'an 1949* issued by the Bureau des Longitudes in Paris mentions a comet and a possible nova in 1110.

The 837 nova approximates the c.800-850 date suggested by Torquemada, but this date is not in or near a *katun* 4-Ahau. The 1006 supernova is not near any significant date for Quetzalcóatl deducible from the sources. The possible nova in 1110 exactly matches one of the three dates suggested by Sahagún. The 1181 supernova is close to the 1179 contended by Davies. Both Sahagún's 1110 and Davies' 1179 must be dismissed, however, if Kukulcán arrived in Yucatán in 986 and if he was the same person as Quetzalcóatl in México, for no human would have lived from 986 or 987 to 1110 or 1181. By this process of elimination, therefore, the only nova or supernova that could have marked the death of Quetzalcóatl would have to be the Crab Nebula supernova observed by Chinese and Japanese astrologers in 1054-1056.

T'o-t'o (1313-1355 A.D.) in his *Sung Shi* (History of the Sung Dynasty) in China recorded this supernova: [299](#)

In the 1st year of the period *Chih-ho* (1054), the 5th moon, the day Chi-ch'ou (July 4) (a guest-star) appeared approximately several inches south-east of T'ien-kuan (Zeta Tauri). After more than a year it gradually became invisible...

On the day *Shin-Wai* (of the 3rd moon of the 1st year of the period *Chia-yu*, that is, April 17, 1056) the Chief of the Astronomical Bureau reported that from the 5th moon of the 1st year of the period *Chih-ho* (June 9 to July 8, 1054) a guest-star had appeared in the morning in the eastern heavens, remaining in the *Tien-Quan* (Zeta Tauri), which has only now become invisible.

The guest star was, therefore, visible in China from July 4, 1054 to August 17, 1056.

The *Sung-hui* states:

On the 22nd day of the 7th moon of the 1st year of the period *Chih-ho* (August 27, 1054) Yang Wai-te said: "... I have observed the appearance of the guest-star; on the star there was slightly an iridescent yellow color ..."

Originally, this star had become visible in the 5th moon of the 1st year of the period *Chih-ho* (June 9 to July 8, 1054) in the

eastern heavens in *Tien-Quan* (Zeta Tauri); it was visible by day, like Venus; pointed rays shot out brilliant on all sides; the color was reddish-white. Altogether it was visible for 23 days.

The *Mai Getsuki* in Japan reports:

In the middle ten-day period of the 4th moon of the 2nd year of the period *Ten-Ki* (that is, May 20 to 30, 1054) and thereafter, between 1 and 3 A.M., a guest star appeared in the orbit of Orion; it was visible in the eastern heavens. It shone like a comet(?) in *T'ien Quan* (Zeta Tauri) and was as large as Jupiter.

Whether it appeared in the sky for two years, as observed in China and Japan, or for eleven years, the guest star of China and Japan was the same as the smoking star of México.

The sequence of these dramatic events the defeat and ship cremation of Quetzalcóatl and the smoke billowing skyward and the explosion of a star into a brilliant supernova convincingly deified the human Quetzalcóatl for all times in the minds of beholders in eleventh century México.

This theory that the Crab Nebula supernova marked the ship cremation of Quetzalcóatl encounters three principal objections: (1) that the year of the supernova was 1054 A.D., not 1051 A.D., (2) that the supernova remained visible 23 days in daylight and 653 days in the nighttime, not eleven years, and (3) that the supernova was not the planet Venus.

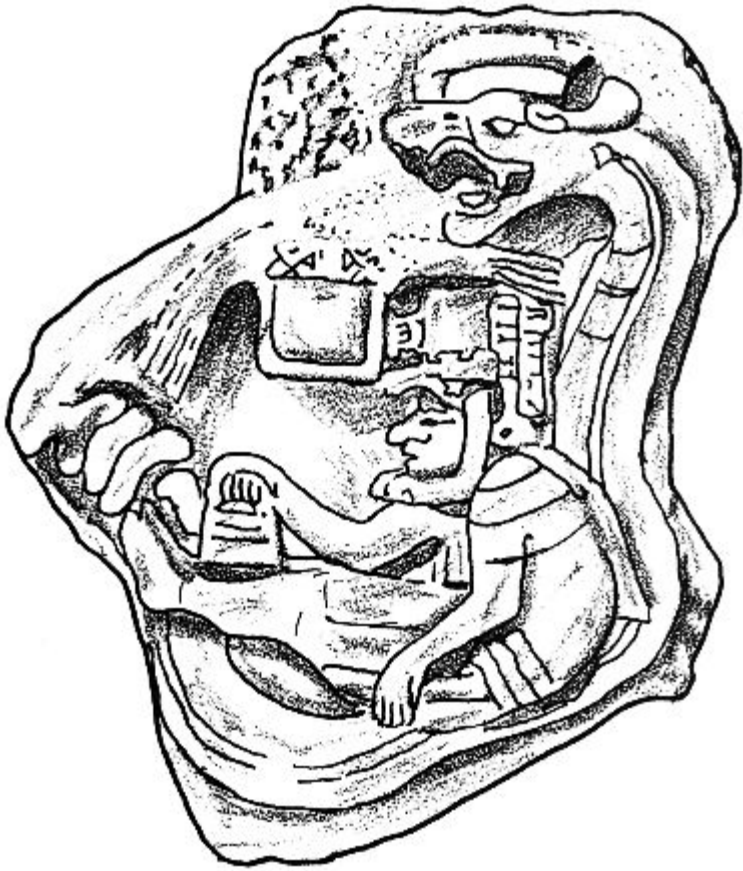
The discrepancy in dates is not a problem. The Nahuas of México had five or more different calendars, and the three-year difference between 1051 A.D. and 1054 A.D. is not surprising. For as explained by the historian Nigel Davies,³⁰⁰ "in studying pre-Columbian chronology (of México), it must first be grasped that where several sources give dates for the accession or death of a given ruler, or for other once-and-for-all events, these dates are seldom identical, but tend to fall in a cluster, usually closely grouped, but sometimes varying by five or more years." A spread of three years from 1051 to 1054, therefore is not an obstacle. The *Origen de los mexicanos* ³⁰¹ and the *Relación de la genealogía*, ³⁰² moreover, say that Quetzalcóatl died two years after his arrival at Tlapallán, which reconfirms the date of Quetzalcóatl's retreat from Tula in 1051 and the date of the ship cremation in 1053.

The reason that the Toltecas of Tula noticed the Crab Nebula supernova earlier in México than the astrologers in China and Japan

saw it probably is that the Toltecas of Tula were more observant and noticed it sooner. Peoples in México always scrutinized the sky awaiting the appearance of the Pleiades, which signaled the inception of the season for planting corn, and they customarily watched the wandering of Venus, a planet that awed them. They would, therefore, have immediately seen the Crab Nebula supernova in 1040 when it appeared in the sky near the Pleiades or near Venus.

The celestial coordinates of the Crab Nebula supernova were approximately 83 degrees longitude and -2 degrees latitude, being the approximate location of the Chinese astronomical segment of the sky called T'ien-Quan. Since the smoke that arose from Quetzalcóatl's body became the planet Venus, the date of Quetzalcóatl's cremation probably was when the Crab Nebula supernova and Venus approached occultation or conjunction. Allowing a 1 degree variance from the Crab Nebula supernova's approximate celestial longitude of 83 degrees and a 1 degree variance from the Crab Nebula supernova's approximate celestial latitude of -2 degrees and consulting the Venus ephemeris (tables),³⁰³ one perceives that the only date between 1040 and 1056 when Venus was within 1 degree from the Crab Nebula supernova's approximate celestial longitude of 83 degrees and within 1 degree from the Crab Nebula supernova's approximate celestial latitude of -2 degrees was July 18, 1053 (Julian, old style). On that date, the celestial coordinates of Venus were 83.17 degrees longitude and -1.46 degrees latitude. Venus, which normally is the third brightest body in the sky after the sun and the moon, and the Crab Nebula supernova, which was even brighter than Venus, were dazzling pyrotechnical displays that occurred as the second great Quetzalcóatl the human Quetzalcóatl, became the planet Venus.

Bernardino de Sahagún,³⁰⁴ Juan de Torquemada,³⁰⁵ and Diego Durán ³⁰⁶ all described Quetzalcóatl as being aged when he departed from Tula, and Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin said that Quetzalcóatl left Tula in 1051 A.D. If Quetzalcóatl was old when he left Tula and if he left in 1051 A.D. he must have disembarked in Yucatán near the end of the *katun* 4-Ahau that extended from March 12, 968 A.D. to November 25, 987 A.D., perhaps in 987 A.D., as a young man in his twenties or early thirties. He must have been an old man in his eighties or nineties when he left Tula in 1051 and Coatzacoalco in a ship or burned in a cremation ship at Coatzacoalco in 1053 A.D.



TOLTECA QUETZALCÓATL FROM LA VENTA

This andesite bas-relief is a Tolteca sculpture (it is not Olmec) found in 1957 near the La Venta, Tabasco, earthen mound.

Chapter VII. CONCLUSION

The story of Quetzalcóatl began in Nonohualco, the region of Tabasco and Yucatán, particularly Tabasco, inhabited by Nahuas speaking the Nahuatl dialect of Náhuatl, by Chontals speaking a Maya tongue called Putun, and by Zoques speaking their own Maya language. Part of Nonohualco, possibly from the Laguna de Términos to Champotón, was the riverine Acallan, "place of boats." These Nahuats and Chontals were bilingual; they were the peoples of Xicalango. The Mayas of Yucatán called them *Ah Itzáob* "lord Itzá," and they became the Cocom, Canul, and other dominators of Yucatán.

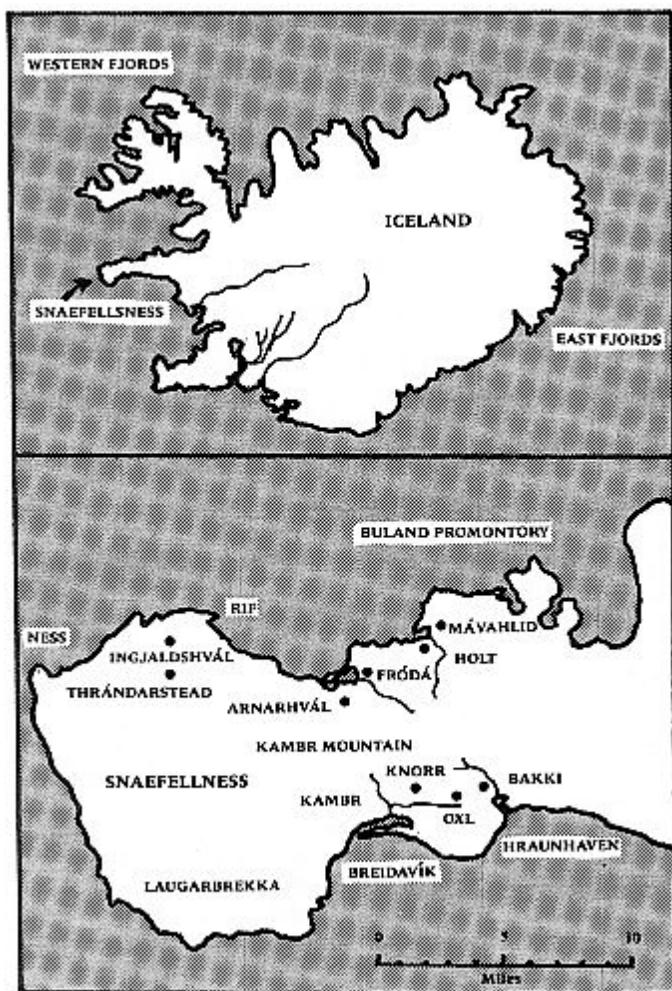
Itzá armies attacked the Mayas of Yucatán twice, once in the Small Descent, from the east, and again in the Great Descent, from the west, both times transported by the boats of the Chontals, the Nahuats being the soldiery. The Great Descent occurred in a *katun* 4-Ahau, and the Itzá combatants seized Chichén Itzá on the Maya date 2-Akbal 1-Yaxkin 307 in a *katun* 4-Ahau, April 26, 970 A.D. The *Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel* and the *Book of Chilam Balam of Tizimín* record the Small Descent and the Great Descent. "Comes the ancestor, comes the successor." Other allusions to these two invasions are throughout the *Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel*. Yet a third descent happened: "For the third time was established the day of the god of our enemies."308 "Thrice shall the justice of our lord descend to the world."309 "Three times it was, they say, that the foreigners arrived."310 The third descent was the coming of Kukulcán in a *katun* 4-Ahau, in 986 or 987 A.D., 16 or 17 years after the Great Descent.

Kukulcán, identified as a "Mexican captain," had only 19 other men in his party. These 20 men blended into the personified and deified 20 days of the Maya calendar. Kukulcán calmed the turmoil in Yucatán and ended the warfare between the Itzá and the Mayas. Both the Itzá and the Mayas thought he was a god and obeyed him. He left Yucatán in a sailing ship. He sailed west and north along the coast of Mexico, pausing at the Tobasco River and other rivers that were the homes of his Nahuatl and Chontal auxiliaries, his Nonohualcas. He proceeded by sea to Pánuco in 1002 A.D. From Pánuco, he moved overland to Tulancingo, where he stayed four years, then to Tula, where he stayed three years. The people of Tula, who were Náhuatl speaking Chichimecas, initially welcomed him. He promoted skills of agriculture, metallurgy, calendrics, and stone-carving, impressing the

primitive Chichimecas. The Chichimeca *tlatoani* of Tula, Huémac, resented Quetzalcóatl's intrusion, and Quetzalcóatl and his Nonohualcas prudently retreated from Tula to Cholula c.1009 A.D. and remained 20 years in Cholula.

Quetzalcóatl, a priest, then seized power in Tula in a year 5-Calli, 1029 A.D., while Huémac was absent. As *tlatoani* of Tula, Quetzalcóatl attacked the Teotenancas of Teotenango, probably because they were allies of Huémac, but failed to subdue them. Huémac, meanwhile, prepared for a return to Tula, amassing an army of Chichimecas to depose Quetzalcóatl and the Nonohualcas. Quetzalcóatl fought back, but as Huémac captured settlement after settlement, some of Quetzalcóatl's confederates abandoned him in fear, and Quetzalcóatl consequently decided to retreat to Nonohualco. As he withdrew toward Nonohualco, Quetzalcóatl delayed Huémac by fighting rear guard actions, planning to escape in Chontal-manned boats. Reaching Coatzacoalco, Quetzalcóatl died, and his Nonohualcas cremated him in a "serpent raft" in 1051 or 1053, as he had requested. Matlaxóchitl, named as Quetzalcóatl's successor turned to battle the oncoming Huémac near Coatzacoalco, "serpent inside a ship," a place remembered also as Cincalco, "inside the corn(-provisioned) boat," as Tlapallan, "place of redness," as Tlillan, "place of blackness," and as Pochtlan. "place of smoke" and Tizaapán, "in the water of gypsum (-like bones)." After the ship cremation of Quetzalcóatl, Huémac and Matlaxóchitl died in a final battle, leaving the Nonohualcas of Tula leaderless. The Nonohualcas of Quetzalcóatl passed from human memory, some going to Nonohualco and some migrating toward Tula. Quetzalcóatl burned much, if not all, of Tula when he fled in 1051 A.D. The city-state of Culhuacán eventually became paramount in the Valley of Mexico.

But Tula never fell in the sense of ceasing to exist. It remained a settlement subordinate to the rulers of Culhuacán, occupied by Chichimecas who had become sedentary agrarian Nahuas. Aztecas wandering from the north reached Tula in 1168 A.D.³¹¹ but moved onward to Tenochtitlan. Tula never again rose to glory. The memory of Tula's greatness endured.



MAP OF ICELAND

EPILOGUE

Björn Ásbrandsson, also known as Björn Breidvikingakappi (Björn the Breidavik Champion), an Icelander, might have been the European who became Kukulkán and Quetzalcóatl.

Originally composed c.1240 A.D., *Eyrbyggja Saga*, also known as *Thórsnesinga Saga* and *Alptfirthinga Saga*, narrates the history of the Icelandic residents of the Snaefellness Peninsula on western Iceland during the years c.884- c.1031. It mentions the voyages of Eiríkr Rauda from Iceland to Greenland, but it emphasizes the career of Snorri Thórsgrímsson, who became *Godi* - a combination of farmer, clan chieftain, Thor-worshipping priest, lawyer, litigant, avenger, assassin, statesman, and surgeon. Born in 964, Snorri voyaged to Norway in 978 when he was 14 years old. Returning to Iceland, he gained influence, prestige, wealth, and power by his guile. He had become a *godi* by 982 when he was 18. He was an avid participant, both as combatant and peacemaker, in the feuds that preoccupied Icelanders in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries and was one of the advocates of Christianity when the Althing (parliament) adopted the new religion in the year 1000. He died in 1031 when he was 67 years old.³¹²

Björn Ásbrandsson, whose father had a farm at Kambr south of Kambr Mountain near the inlet on the south side of the Snaefellsness Peninsula called Breidavík ("broad inlet," to be distinguished from Breidafjörðr or Breidafinnh north of the Peninsula), made the mistake of seducing Thurídr who was Snorri's half-sister and who was married to Thorbjörn. To prevent the trysts of these lovers, Snorri brought his sister home to Helgafell. Thorbjörn being dead, Snorri then married his sister Thurídr not to Björn but to Thóroddr. Björn, who never married, continued the romance after Thurídr's return with her new husband to her deceased husband's farm at Fródá, across the mountainous peninsula from Kambr on the north side. Björn, an indefatigable walker, frequently crossed the mountains from Kambr on the south side of the peninsula to Fródá on the north side to visit Thurídr. The cuckolded husband Thóroddr and four other men ambushed Björn; but Björn, a strong man who was the *Breidvikingakappi*, the Breidavík champion, killed two of the assailants, came home wounded and bloody, and ultimately received a sentence of three years' exile and fines paid by his father, Ásbrandr. That summer Thurídr bore Björn's son, whom she named Kjartan, an Irish

name (Ceartan). The exiled Björn sailed to Norway and then to Jónsborg in Denmark, where he joined the Jónsvikingr led by Pálnatóki. As narrated in Chapter 29 of *Eyrbyggja Saga*:

Björn joined them by submitting to their rules and gained the reputation of a brave warrior. He was at Jónsborg when Styrbjörn the strong conquered it. Björn also went to Sweden when the Jónsvikingr aided Styrbjörn, and he was in the battle of Fyrisvellir in which Styrbjörn was killed. He escaped into the forest with other Jónsvfkingr. As long as Pálnatóki was alive, Björn remained with him and was regarded as a man of honor and one of the bravest in all dangers.

The rules of the Jónsvikingr as reported in *Jónsvikinga Saga*, required a minimum age of 18 for membership and excluded women from the Jónsborg fort.

Some time later, probably before the lapse of the three-year exile of Björn, ArnBjörn Asbrandsson, brother of Björn, left Iceland to seek Björn in Denmark. Two years later, Björn and Arnbjörn returned to Iceland. That summer Björn met Thurídr at Haugabrekkur near Fródá Creek, and they resumed their affair. Thódr Blígr, an in-law of Arnbjörn, counselled Björn: "And it would be best for you two Björn and Thurídr not to see each other any more. Try to forget Thurídr, Björn."

Björn replied, "That is probably good advice, and yet it is far from my mind, even though I am aware that her brother Snorri is superior to me in influence and power."

"Do as you think best," Thódr said.

Björn's father Ásbrandr having died, Björn went home to Kambr and began farming his father's land. That winter Björn kept walking across the mountains between Kambr and Fródá to visit Thurídr, once being caught in a blizzard and staying in a cave for three days until the storm abated. Thóroddr's anger smoldered, and finally he sought the aid of his brother-in-law, Snorri. In the words of Chapter 47 of the *Eyrbyggja Saga*:

... Thóroddr Skattkaupandi invited Snorri *godi*, his brother-in-law, to visit him at Fródá. Snorri went there with eight men. Thóroddr complained to him that he felt he was being shamed and vexed by Björn Ásbrandsson, who was in the habit of coming there to talk to Thurídr, his wife and Snorri's sister. Thóroddr said he thought it was Snorri's concern to seek redress for this aggravation.

Snorri stayed there for several days; and when he left, Thóroddr saw him on his way, and gave him seemly gifts. From there Snorri rode south across the mountains and let it be known that he intended to ride to the ship laid up at the mouth of the Hraunhöfn inlet. It was summer, during the time of haying in the homefields.

But when they arrived on the height of Kambr Mountain, Snorri said:

"From here we shall ride down in the direction of Kambr farm. I want you to know that I intend to make an attack on Björn and kill him if chances are favorable. But we will not attack him if he is inside because the buildings there are very strongly constructed, and Björn is a brave and hardy fellow. Also, we don't have much of a force ... Now in case Björn should be outside, as is to be expected since this is such good drying weather, I want you, kinsman (uncle) Már (Halvardsson), to make an attack on him. Be on your guard, for he is not a chicken-hearted man. (He must be)... fatally wounded at the first onset."

And when they rode down from the mountains toward the farm, they saw Björn on the homefield working on a hay sledge. He was alone and had no weapons except a small axe and a large whittling knife with which he had cleaned the wood out of the bore holes. The blade was a span in length from the haft.

Björn saw Snorri and his men riding down from the mountains and on to the plain. and he recognized them at once. Snorri *godi* was dressed in a blue hooded cloak and was riding at the head of his group. Björn made a quick decision: he grabbed the knife and went toward them.

As soon as he came up to Snorri, he seized the sleeve of his cloak with his one hand, and with the other hand he held the knife poised in such a way that he could most easily thrust it into Snorri's chest if that were called for.

Björn greeted them when they met, and Snorri returned his greeting; but Már faltered because he thought Björn would quickly stab Snorri if any attempt were made to attack him. Then Björn went along with Snorri and his men and asked what the common news was, at the same time keeping a firm grip on Snorri's sleeve.

Then Björn spoke as follows: "The fact is, farmer Snorri, and I do not deny it, that I have done some things to you which you

can in justice blame me for; and I have been told that you have been harboring a grudge against me. Now it may be that you just happen to be riding by. But in case you have some business with me, I think you had better come out with it; and if so, I want you to grant me a truce, and I'll turn back, for I am not a fool to be led by the nose."

Snorri replied: "You got such a lucky grip on me when we met that we'll have to grant you a truce for the time being, regardless of what our intentions were. But this I want to ask of you, that you refrain henceforth from beguiling my sister Thurídr. For you and I can never be on peaceful terms if you go on doing what you have done in the past."

Björn answered, "I will promise only what I can keep, but I do not know how I can do that if Thurídr and I live in the same district."

Snorri replied, "There is really nothing to prevent you from moving away from this district."

Björn said, "What you say is true, and it shall be thus since you yourself have come to see me. The way our meeting has turned out, I will promise you that you and Thóroddr will not be provoked during the next years by my visiting Thurídr."

"That would be doing the right thing," said Snorri.

After that they parted. Snorri *godi* rode to the ship and then home to Helgafell. On the following day Björn rode south the Hraunhöfn and right way took passage on the ship there. They were late in getting started, and then they got a northeast wind which persisted for a long time during the summer. Nothing was heard of this ship for a long time afterward.

Thus Björn fled from the power of Snorri, sailing southwest before a northeast wind.

Eyrbyggja Saga mentions no date for Björn's flight, but some clues help establish the year.

Björn and Snorri *godi* were contemporaries. Both *Eyrbyggja Saga* and *Laxdaela Saga* record that Snorri died in the year after the death of King Olaf the Saint, who died in 1030. *Laxdaela Saga* adds that Snorri was 67 years when he died. Snorri's birth, therefore, occurred in 964 A.D. *Kristni Saga* reports that Snorri had become a *godi* and was living at Helgafell when he was 18 years old. Snorri's eighteenth birthday was in 982. The anonymous author of *Eyrbyggja Saga* counted by seasons winter, spring, summer, autumn; and his narrative season to season thus indicates that Björn's exile to Denmark and Björn's joining Pálnatóki's Jómsvikingr happened in 982. Since the rules of

the *Jómsvíkingr* required a minimum age of 18 for membership, as stated by the *Jómsvíkinga Saga*, Björn was 18 or older in the year 982. Björn's banishment was for three years. Presumably before the end of three years, Björn's brother Árnbjörn left Iceland to find Björn, and two years later they both returned to Iceland, probably in 985. The saga after narrating Björn's escape from Snorri *godi* merely tells that Snorri Thórbrandsson (who was a different Snorri) and Thorleifr Kimbi sailed to Greenland. Adding parenthetically that Snorri Thórbrandsson died fighting Skraelingar (Indians) when he accompanied Thorfinnr Karlsefni to the North American mainland and that Thorleifr lived in Greenland until old age, the saga then notes the coming of Christianity to Iceland in the year 1000 as "the next event reported," not disclosing how many years passed after Björn sailed and before the Althing adopted the new religion.

But *Eyrbyggja Saga* contributes another clue: the ship that carried Björn departed with a wind blowing from the northeast and propelling the vessel southwest. No ships in the 980s other than Eiríkr Rauda's fleet of 982 and his fleet of 986 sailed westerly from Iceland until Eiríkr had settled in Greenland in 986. Bjarni, who sighted the North American coast, sailed late in 986 after the departure of Eiríkr. Since the captain of the ship that carried Björn voluntarily started a westerly voyage, he was sailing toward Greenland, and he would not have been sailing toward Greenland before 986. Probably this ship was not among Eiríkr's 25 or 35 *knörrir* in 986, for *Eyrbyggja Saga* narrates Eiríkr's 982 and 986 voyages without linking Björn to them. Björn fled from Snorri in Iceland, therefore, in late 986 or afterwards.

The *Eyrbyggja Saga* in Chapter 64 adds an epilogue about Björn Ásbrandsson:

There was a man named Gudleifr, who was the son of Gunnlaug the Wealthy of Staumfirth and the brother of Thórfinnr, from whom the Sturlungar are descended. Gudleifr was a great merchant. He owned a large *knörr* vessel ... In the latter days of King Olaf the Saint (who died in 1030 A.D.) Gudleifr made a merchant voyage westward to Dublin. And when he left there, he intended to return to Iceland.

Sailing west of Ireland, he got counterwinds from the east and northeast and was driven far west and southwest out of his course so that they did not know where they were.

By then the summer drew to a close, and they made many vows that they might reach land; and at last they caught sight of land. It was a large land, but no one knew which country it was. Gudleifr and his men decided to approach it because they thought it unwise to stay longer on the high seas. They found a

good harbor there, but they had made land only a short while when some men came up to them. They knew no one there, but they rather thought that those people spoke Irish.

Soon such a large crowd gathered that there must have been many hundreds. They attacked Gudleifr's men, made them all captive, and tied their hands; and then they drove them inland. They were taken to some meeting where sentence was to be passed on them. They gathered that some wanted them killed while others were for having them apportioned to various places and made slaves.

While this was being debated, they saw a band of men under a banner approaching *on horseback*, and they supposed that there must be some chieftain among them. And when this band drew nearer, they saw a tall man of martial bearing riding under the banner. He was quite advanced in years and his hair was white. All those who were there bowed before him and greeted him as their lord. They soon discovered that all measures and decisions were referred to him.

Then this man had Gudleifr and his men brought up to him; and when they came before him, he spoke to them in Norse and asked what country they were from. They told him that most of them were Icelanders. He asked which of them were Icelanders. Thereupon Gudleifr stepped up and greeted him, and he returned the greeting and asked what part of Iceland they were from. Gudleifr said they were from the Borgarfirth district. Then he asked what part of Borgarfirth they were from, and Gudleifr told him. Thereupon he asked very carefully about every single one of the more important personages in the Bargar firth and Breidafirth districts. In course of their conversation he asked about Snorri *godi* and his sister Thurídr of Fródá; and he asked particularly about all matters at Fródá and most of all about the youth Kjartan, who by then was the farmer at Fródá.

The countrymen called out again, demanding that some decision be made about the ship's crew. Then this tall man stepped aside and told off twelve of his men to advise him, and they sat deliberating for a long time. Thereupon they returned to the place where the crowd was gathered.

The tall man addressed Gudleifr and his men as follows: "We people of this country have discussed your case, and the others have agreed to place your fate in my hands. I will grant you permission to sail wherever you want to. Even though you may think it is rather late in the summer for that, I advise you to leave this place because these people are not to be trusted and are hard to deal with. The consider that their laws have

been broken."

Gudleifr asked, "Who shall we say procured us our freedom if fate grants us a return to our native country?" He replied, "That I shall not tell you, for I do not wish my kinsmen and foster brothers the sort of reception here which you would have had if it had not been for me. But now I have grown so old that it is not unlikely that death may carry me off any moment. And even though I live for a little while longer, there are men in this country more powerful than I am who will make short shrift of foreigners even though they may not come so close to us as you have."

Then this man had their ship made ready for them, and he remained there with them until a favorable wind came and they could put out from shore. But before he and Gudleifr parted, he took a gold ring from his arm and placed it and also a good sword in Gudleifr's hands.

He said to Gudleifr, "If fate permits you to reach the land of your birth, take this sword to Kjartan, the farmer at Fródá, and this ring to Thurídr, his mother."

Gufleifr asked, "Who shall I say sent these precious things?"

He replied, "Say that he sent them who was a better friend to the mistress of the house at Fródá than to her brother, the *godi* at Helgafell (Snorri *godi*). But if anyone thinks he knows from this who was the owner of these things, then tell them this: that I forbid any and every man to try to find me because that is an extremely hazardous undertaking unless they have the same good luck in landing as you did. For this is a large country, with few harbors, and people every where are hostile to foreigners unless they are as fortunate as you."

With that they parted.

Gudleifr and his companions put out to sea and landed in Ireland late in the fall. They spent the winter in Dublin. In the summer following they sailed to Iceland, and Gudleifr delivered the gifts.

And all were certain that this man was Björn the Breidavik Champion; but there is no other information available concerning that than what has been told here.

This tabulation compares the Björn Ásbrandsson story in the *Eyrbyggja Saga* to the Quetzalcóatl-Kukulkán legend:

Björn Ásbrandsson

1. Was encountered in a "large land."
2. Had twelve advisors.
3. Was white-skinned.
4. Was tall.
5. Wore hood and cassock.
6. Wore a gold armband.
7. In the "large land" c. 1030 A.D.
8. "All those who were there bowed before him and treated him as their lord...all measures and decisions were referred to him."

Quetzalcóatl-Kukulcán

1. Was in Yucatán and México.
2. Mayapán founded by Kukulcán had twelve advisors.
3. Was white-skinned.
4. Was tall.
5. Wore hood and cassock.
6. Nahuas wore gold arm bands in the early sixteenth century.
7. In México 1002 to 1053 A.D.
8. Became *tlatoanoi* of Tula in 1029 A.D.

9."...was quite advanced in years and his hair was white."

10. Arrived in the "large land" by ship.

11. Was a walker.

12. Was a ball player:
"It was the custom of the people of Breidavík to hold ball games during the first days of winter."

Björn Ásbrandsson

13. Rode in a litter carried by two (or four) men.

14. Had a banner in the "large land."

15."...these people in the large land are not to be trusted and are hard to deal with... there are men in this country more powerful than I am...hostile to foreigners.."

16.Was unmarried

17. Had a gold armband.

9. Was aged in México

10. Arrived at Champotón and later Pánuco by ship.

11. Was a walker called by Hernando Alvarado Tezozómoc "the god of 1-Reed Walker."

12."At another place he (Quetzalcóatl) built a ball court..."

Quetzalcóatl-Kukulcán

13. Was called Nacxit meaning "four-footed."

14. The Nahuas had banners at the time of Spanish conquest "Mayapán," Kukulcán's capital in Yucatán means "banner of the Mayas."

15.Was defeated by his enemies in México.

16.Was unmarried.

17. Taught smelting of gold and silver.

18. Gudleifr's men were driven inland.

19. Was exceptionally strong.."the two brothers, Árnbjörn and Björn, because of their great strength, were not considered suited to take part in the games unless, indeed, they were matched against each other."

20. Lived for a time in Denmark, where Norsemen had ship cremations.

21. Denmark had become Christian between 953 and 965.

22. Had a sword.

23. Fled from the threat of Snorri's power.

18. Tula and Cholula are inland.

19. Was exceptionally strong..."he set in place a large rock.. (he) moved it with his little finger...when many pushed it, in no way could it move..

20. Was cremated in a burning ship.

21. Acted like a Christian missionary.

22. Carried iron-studded clubs.

23. Fled from the threat of Huémac's power.

Despite these remarkable parallels, two objections militate against the identification of Quetzalcóatl as Björn Asbrandsson, the Breidavik Champion.

Quetzalcóatl acted like a Christian missionary, but nothing in *Eyrbyggja Saga* says that Björn was a Christian, the only hint being that Björn had twelve advisers like the twelve disciples of Christ. Probably he was, however, exposed to Christianity. Björn was in Denmark 982-985, and most Danes had become Christians between 953 and 965. Two notorious Christian missionaries, Bishop Fridrek and Thorvaldr Kodransson, were proselytizing in Iceland from 981 or 982 to 986, Björn having returned to Iceland from Denmark in 985. If Björn converted to Christianity in either Denmark or Iceland, he kept his religion a secret, or the anonymous author deemed it irrelevant to his story. Björn's combative nature, however; is not inconsistent; for tenth century Christian missionaries in Iceland and Scandinavia were more prone to take an eye for an eye than to turn the other cheek.

Although the Nahuas remembered extinct mammoths that once roamed the land, calling them giants, they had no legend about horses before the Spaniards intruded. For this reason. I have examined and retranslated the Icelandic text of *Eyrbyggja Saga* as it appears in Thórsteinn frá Hamri's edition and in Einar Ól. Sveinsson's and Matthías Thórdarson's redactions issued by Íslensk Fornrit, the latter being annotated to all known manuscripts of *Eyrbyggja Saga*. A passage about Björn and the horse reads in English:

... they saw a band of men under
a banner approaching *on horseback*...

The word "horse," which is *hest* in Icelandic, is not in the text. The verb *reid* is. The verb *reida* is the Icelandic cognate of the English "ride, rode, ridden." *Reida* connotes the riding of a horse but Geir T. Zoega in his *Dictionary of Old Icelandic* added that it means also the being carried on ones shoulder. E. V. Gordon in his *Introduction to Old Norse* defined the noun *reid* as "chariot." Literally retranslated, then, this passage is:

And while that was discussed, they saw where a band of men rode, and there was a banner borne by the band. They then thought they understood that some manner of chief was with the band; and when the band was nearer to that place, they saw that under the banner rode a tall man. ..

The Nahuas had porters called *tlamene* who carried nobles in litters. Nahua lords rode in litters when they met Cortés. In 1840, the lawyer-traveler John Lloyd Stephens observed between San Pedro and Palenque in Chiapas that porters carried people in two devices: "... *hammacas* (hammocks) or *sillas*; the former being a cushioned chair, with a long pole at each end, to be borne by four Indians before and behind, the traveller sitting with his face to the side, and...only used by very heavy men and *padres* (priests); and the latter an armchair, to be carried on the back of an Indian." Stephens continued:

... the *silla*...was a large, clumsy armchair, put together with wooden pins and bark strings. The Indian who was to carry me, like all the others, was small, not more than five feet seven, very thin, but symmetrically formed. A bark strap was tied sitting down, he placed his back against the back of the chair, adjusted the length of the strings, and smoothed the bark across his

forehead with a little cushion to relieve the pressure. An Indian on each side lifted it up, and the carrier rose on his feet, stood still a moment, threw me up once or twice to adjust me on his shoulders, and set off with one man on each side...I could feel every movement, even to the heaving of his chest.

As *tlatoani* of Tula, the aging Quetzalcóatl, no longer the strong walker that he was in his youth, might have ridden in a *silla* carried on the back of a single *atlmene* or in a litter carried by two or four or six or eight. Thus transported, he would have seemed tall to the Icelanders of Gudleifr Gunnlaugsson's crew as he approached.

NOTES

- 1 *Uei tlatoani* is "first speaker" in Nêhuatl. *Uei tlatoani* was Motecuhzoma's title. "Emperor" is a loose translation of *uei tlatoani*. In meaning, *tlatoani* is similar to the Icelandic *logsögumar*, "law speaker."
- 2 Bernardino de Sahagún. *Florentine Codex*. University of Utah Press, S.L.C. (1975, 1979), pt. IX, pp. 17-19, and pt. XIII, pp. 1-3, translated by AnhurJ. O. Anderson and Charles E. Dibble; Bernardino de Sahagún, *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España*, Editorial Porrúa, México (1956), vol. IV, pp. 23-24; Diego Muñoz Camargo, *Historia de Tlaxcala*, Oficina Tip. de la Secretaria de Fomento. México (1892) and Biblioteca de Facsmiles Mexicanos, Guadalajara (1972) pp. 169-172.
- 3 Hernando Alvarado Tezozómoc, *Crónica mexicana* Editorial Porrúa. México (1975) pp. 683-684.
- 4 *Ibid.*
- 5 *Ibid.*
- 6 *Ibid.*
7. Bernal Díaz del Castillo, *Historia verdadera de la Nueva España*, Editorial Porrúa. México (1969), Sepan Cuantos edition, *passim*.
- 8 The chiefs of Tabasco gave this remarkable woman to Cortés. The Spaniards named her Marina, and her Náhuatl name, Malintzin. probably was Malinalli (Grass), a day name in Nêhuatl, or was a corruption of Marina. with the addition of the Náhuatl honorific suffix *-tzin*. She knew both Chontal Maya and Náhuatl; and since Jeronimo de Aguilar, a priest rescued by Cortés, knew both Yucatec Maya and Spanish, the two of them together could interpret from Náhuatl to Maya to Spanish and from Spanish to Maya to Náhuatl. Without Malintzin. Cortés probably would not have been successful in México. Until he no longer needed her, she was his mistress. She bore him a son.
- 9 Bernardino de Sahagún, *Historia de las cosas de Nueva España*, Editorial Porrúa (1956), vol. IV p. 38.
- 10 Diego Muñoz Camargo, *op. cit.*, p. 208.
- 11 Francisco López de Gomara, *Historia de la conquista de México*, Editorial Pedro Robredo, México (1943) pp. 198-199. António de Herrera y Tordesillas, *Historia general de los hechos de los castellanos, en las islas. y tiema-firme de el mar océano*, Editorial Guaranía, Asunción de Paraguay (1944). vol. III, p. 194 said:

Their major god (in Cholula) was Quecacochtli, which is to say so much as god of the air, first founder of that city that they affirm that he was a virgin, and instituter of fasting and of taking blood from the tongue, and ears, and of sacrificing quails, and doves; he wore to the feet, white, for chastity, a cloak on top strewn with reddish crosses.

12 Several versions of Motecuhzoma's oration are extant. Primarily I have used one in Antonio de Solís, *Historia de la conquista de Mexiv*, Librería Europea, Paris (1858), pp. 197--200. I have consulted also the versions in Francisco López de Gómara, *Historia de la conquista de México*, Editorial Pedro Robredo, México (1943), pp. 210-213; Bernardino de Sahagún, *Florentine Cex*, University of Utah Press, S.L.C., (1955), part XIII, p. 42, translated by Arthur J. O. Anderson and Charles E. Dibble; Bernardino de Sahagún, *Historia de las cosas de Nueva España*, Editorial Porrúa, (1956), vol., IV pp. 43-44; Hernán Cortés, "Relaciones," in Eulalia Guzmán, *Relaciones de Hernán Cortés a Carlos V sobre la invasión de Anahuac*, Editorial Orion, México (1966), pp. 221-230; Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxóchitl, *Obras históricas*, Editora Nacional, México (1965), vol. 11, p. 377; Juan de Torquemada, *Los veinte i un rituales i monarquía indiana*, Editorial Porrúa, México (1969), vol. V, pp. 452-454; Diego Durán, *Historia de las Indias de Nueva España y islas de la tierra firme*, Editorial Porrúa, México (1967), vol. II, p. 541. These versions are somewhat similar. Since no one recorded the words of Motecuhzoma verbatim, since his phrases passed from Náhuatl to Spanish by the tongue of Malintzin, and since all memories are fallible, no historian will ever know exactly what Motecuhzoma said. Perhaps the summary by Diego Durán is reasonably accurate:

.....Motecuhzoma by the tongue of Marina spoke to the Marques (Cortés) and bade him welcome to that (place), his city, (and said that) he was pleased to see him, that he had been in his place and reigning and ruling the kingdom which his (Cortés') father, the god Quetzalcóatl, had left, in whose seat and dais he unworthily had been seated and whose vassals he had ruled and governed, that if (Cortés) was coming to repossess it from him he was there at his service, that he was relinquishing it, for in the prophecies and *Relaciones* of his ancestors it was found so prophesied all written; that he would take it very well, (that) he was subjecting himself to his service, and that if he (Cortés) had not come (for any reason) other than to see him (Motecuhzoma)

he regarded it as a very great favor and in it he had received great pleasure and contentment and extreme happiness in his heart, that he (Cortés) rest and look at that which he had need, and that he (Motecuhzoma) would give and provide it in great abundance.

- 13 António de Solis, *op. cit.*, p. 198.
- 14 António de Solis, *op. cit.*, p. 199.
- 15 Francisco López de Gómara, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 212.
- 16 The Maya "short count" calendar was cyclical, and a *katun* 4-Ahau reoccurred after each revolution of 13 *katuns*. The name of each *katun* was the name also of the last day in the *katun*: a *katun* 4-Ahau always ended on a day named 4-Ahua. A revolution of the 13 *katuns*, called by the Mayas a fold or doubling of the *katun*, was approximately 256¼ Gregorian years. The reasons for believing that the *katun* 4-Ahau marking Kukulcán's arrival in Yucatán was the one that ended November 25, 987 A.D. are explained in Chapter V. The present Chapter quotes the sources establishing that a *katun* 4-Ahau was the Maya date of Kukulcán's arrival.
- 17 Francisco Hernández, (*Relación*), summarized by Bartolomé de las Casas, *Apologética historia de las Indias*, Historiadores de Indias, Nueva Biblioteca de Autores Españoles, Bailly Bailliere e Hijos, Madrid (1909), pp. 328-330.
- 18 Diego de Landa, *Relación de las cosas de Yucatán.*, Editorial Porrúa, México (1968), p. 13; António de Herrera y Tordesillas, *Historia general de los hechos de los castellanos, en las islas, y tierra-firme de el mar occéano*, Editorial Guaranía, Asunción de Paraguay (1945), vol. VI, p. 101.
- 19 Chapter IV explains the reasons for believing that Kukulcán traveled in a sailing ship.
- 20 Francisco Hernández,
- 21 Diego de Landa, *loc. cit.*; António de Herrera y Tordesillas, *loc. cit.* Historians and archaeologists have long debated the question of who the Itzás were. The evidence convinces me that they were Náhuatl-speaking people from México or Tabasco. J. Eric S. Thompson, however, thought that they were Chontals (Putuns). The pros and cons are beyond the scope of this book.
- 22 Francisco Hernández, *loc. cit.*
- 23 Diego de Landa, *loc. cit.*; António de Herrera y Tordesillas, *loc. cit.*
- 24 *Ibid.*
- 25 *Ibid.*
- 26 António de Herrera y Tordesillas, *loc. cit.*
- 27 Diego de Landa, *loc. cit.*; António de Herrera y Tordesillas. *loc. cit.*

Investigation of the Mayapán archaeological site in the 1950s disclosed a wall 9 kilometers in circumference, seldom more than 2 meters high. and averaging 2½ meters in width. The wall has twelve gateways, seven large and five small. The intramural area, known to the ancient Maya as Ichpaa. is 4.2 square kilometers and contained approximately 2500 structures. See W. R. Bullard, *Residential Property Walls at Mayapán*, Department of Archaeology Current Report No. 3, Carnegie Institution, Washington (1953); E. M. Shook. *The Great Wall of Mayapán*, Department of Archaeology Current Report No. 2. Carnegie Institution, Washington (1952-1954); Morris R. Jones, *Map of the Ruins of Mayapán*. Carnegie Institution, Washington (1953); and Jorge E. Hardoy, *Pe-Columbian Cities*, Walker and Company, New York (1973), pp. 260-265.

28 Diego de Landa, *loc. cit*; António de Herrera y Tordesillas, *loc. cit*.

29 In 612 Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin. who relied on Nahua histories. positively stated that Quetzalcóatl (Kukulcán) arrived at Tula in the Valley of México in 1002 A.D. Therefore, Quetzalcóatl probably left Mayapán and Chmnpotón in the same year. See Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin. *Memorial breve de la fundación de la ciudad de Culhuacan*, W. Kohlhammer Verlag. Stuttgart (1958) p. 9.

30 Diego de Landa, *loc. cit*; António de Herrera y Tordesillas, *loc. cit*.

31 The reasons for believing that Kukulcán built a ship are discussed in Chapter IV.

32 Juan de Torquemada in 1615 recorded that Quetzalcóatl came to Tula "by way of Pánuco." See Juan de Torquemada, *Los veinte i un libros rituales i monarquía indiana*, Editorial Porrúa, México (1969) vol. II pp, 254-256. Diego Muñóz Camargo in his *Historia de Tlaxala* wrote c.1585: "Quetzalcohautl said that he came by way of the north and through Pánuco..."

33 Diego de Landa, *loc. cit*; António de Herrera y Tordesillas, *lo cit*

34 The date of Mayapán's fall is in the fifteenth century. Diego de Landa, *op. cit.*, p. 17 said that "more than 500 years had passed from the date of Mayapán's foundation to the date of its abandonment" and that the Mayas left Mayapán "one hundred twenty years ago." Landa having written in 1566, "one hundred twenty years ago" would be 1446. Landa then confused the issue by saying (*op. cit.*, p. 20) that Mayapán "was destroyed one hundred twenty five years ago," thus suggesting a date of 1441 A.D. Herrera y Tordesillas in his vol. VI at p. 103 asserted that the Maya abandoned Mayapán "at the end of five hundred years" and that this date was 70 years before the arrival of the

Castilians. If Herrera y Tordesillas considered the arrival of the Castilians to be the Hernández de Córdoba expedition in 1517, the date of counted from Gerónimo de Aguilar's shipwreck in Yucatán in 1511, the year of Mayapán's fall would be 1441 A.D.

35 Diego de Landa, *loc. cit.*

36 Juan de Torquemada, *op. cit.*, vol. 11, p. 52.

37 In their *relación* quoted later in this Chapter, Pedro de Santillána and Gaspar António Xiu referred to "Quetzalquat"; and in their *relaciones* also quoted later in this Chapter, Francisco de Bracamonte, Martín de Palomar, Juan de la Cueva Santillán, Cristóbal Sanchez, Juan de Paredes, and Yñigo Nieto referred to Kukulcán in narrating the same historical event. These *Relaciones de Yutcatán* are in the *Colección de documentos ineditos relativos al descubrimiento, conquista y organización de las antiguas posesiones españolas de ultramar*, 2d series, Real Academia de la Historia, Madrid (1898-1900), vols. II and 13.

38 Diego de Landa, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-14, 98.

39 The huge pyramid at Chichén Itzá is still known as the Temple of Kukulcán. The Spaniards called it also El Castillo, meaning "the castle."

40 António de Herrera y Tordesillas, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

41 Francisco Hernández, *loc. cit.*

42 Diego López de Cogolludo, *Historia de Yucathán*, Editorial Academia Liter aria, México (1957), p. 199.

43 *Colección de documentos inéditos relativos al descubrimiento, conquista y organización de las antiguas posesiones españolas de ultramar*, 2d series, Real Academia de la Historia, Madrid (1898), vol. 11, pp. 23, 24.

44 An *encomendero* was the holder of an *encomienda*. An *encomienda* was a grant of the right to collect tributes from the Indians within a designated territory, with the concomitant duty to propagate the Catholic faith.

45 A *regidor* in Spanish was a minor official, defined by the *Diccionario de la lengua española* of the Real Academia Española as "consejal que no ejerce ningun otro cargo municipal."

46 *Principal* in Spanish means "important person" or "chief."

47 Alfred M. Tozzer, translator, Landa's *Relación de las Casas de Yucatán*, Papers of the Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, Cambridge (1941), vol. XVIII, p. 41 n. 206.

48 Francisco de Bracamonte and Martín de Palomar, "Relación de Mutul," in *Colección de documentos inéditos relativos al descubrimiento, conquista y organización de las antiguas posesiones*

españolas de ultramar, 2d series, Real Academia de la Historia. Madrid (1898), vol. I I, pp. 78-79.

- 49 Pedro de Santillán and Gaspar António Xiu, "Relación de Quinacama o Moxopipe", *Colección de documentos inéditos relativos al descubrimiento, conquista y organización de las antiguas posesiones españolas de ultramar*, 2d series, Real Academia de la Historia, Madrid (1898), vol. 11, p. 255.
- 50 Juan de la Cueva Santillán, "Relación de Isamal y Santa Mana," *Colección de documentos inéditos relativos al descubrimiento, conquista y organización de las antiguas posesiones españolas de ultramar*, 2d series, Real Academia de la Historia. Madrid (1898), vol. II, pp. 270,271.
- 51 Cristóbal Sánchez, "Relación de Tecaúto y Tepacán," *Colección de documentos inéditos relativos al descubrimiento, conquista y organización de las antiguas posesiones españolas de ultramar*, 2d series, Real Academia de la Historia, Madrid (1898), vol. 11, p. 121.
- 52 Juan de Paredes, "Relación de Quizil y Sitipeche," *Colección de documentos inéditos relativos al descubrimiento, conquista y organización de las antiguas posesiones españolas de ultramar*, 2d series, Real Academia de la Historia, Madrid (1898), vol II, p. 215.
- 53 Yñigo Nieto, "Relación de Quitelcam y Cabiche," *Colección de documentos inéditos relativos al descubrimiento, conquista y organización de las antiguas pesesiones españolas de ultramar*, 2d series, Real Academia de la Historia, Madrid (1898), vol. 11, p. 226.
- 54 Yñigo Niego, *op cit.*, p. 231.
- 55 The facts about Gaspar António Xiu are in Alfred M. Tozzer. *op. cit.*, pp. 44-46 n. 219. See also Crescencio Carrillo y Ancona, *Disertación sobre la historia de la lengua maya yucateca*, Merida (1937), pp. 8-12; Gustavo Martínez Alomia, *Historiadores de Yucatán ...*, Campeche (1906), pp. 20-22; Jose M. Váldez Acosta. *A través de las centurias. Obra especial que contiene puentes historicos... antiques duocumentos y retratos.* , Merida (1923), vol. I p. 144; Ricardo Mimensa Castillo. "El Crónista yucateco", Gaspar António Xiu, "Anales de la Sociedad de la Gegrafia y Historia de Guatemala (1937), vol. 13, pp. 380-390.
- 56 Diego de Landa, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-16; António de Herrera y Tornosillas, *op.cit.*, vol. VI, pp. 102-103.
- 57Diego de Landa, *op. cit.*, p. 17; António de Herrera y Tordesillas. *op. cit.*, vol. VI, pp. 103-104.
- 58 Ralph L. Roys, translator *The Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel*. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman (1967) p. 58. A partial

translation is in Daniel G. Brinton, *The Maya Chronicles*, AMS Press, New York (1969).

- 59 I have corrected *xax um* ("green bird") to read *yax yum* ("ancestor," "first father," or "first ruler") in Roys' transcription and have changed his translation of *kuh* from "quetzal bird" to *koh* to read "successor."
- 60 I have amended Roys' translation of *tu pachob* from "with them" to "after them."
- 61 Maud Worcester Makemson, translator, *The Book of the Jaguar Priest*, Henry Schuman, New York (1951) and Munro S. Edmonson, translator, *The Ancient Future of the Itz'á*. . , University of Texas Press, Austin (1982). Partial translations are Alfred Barrera Vasquez and Sílvia Rendón, *El libro de los libros de Chilam Balam*, Fondo de Cultura Económica, México (I 948); Alfred Barrera Vásquez and Sylvanus Griswold Morley, "The Maya Chronicles," *Contributions to American Anthropology and History*, Carnegie Institution, Washington (1949), vol. 10 No. 48, pp. 1-85; Juan Martínez Hernández, *Crónicas mayas*, Merida (1926) and Ralph L. Roys, "The Maya Katun Prophecies of the Books of Chilam Balam," Series I, *Contributions to American Anthropology and History*, Carnegie Institution, Washington (1954).
- 62 Sylvanus Griswold Morley, George W. Brainerd, and Robert J. Sharer, *The Ancient Maya*, Stanford University Press, Stanford (1984), p. 510. The phrase *u kahlay katunob*, translated as "native chronicles" by Morley, means "memory of the katuns" or "record of the *katuns*" in Yucatec Maya.
- 63 In the manuscript I read a word as *uac*, but I believe it should mean "fold" and have translated it accordingly.
- 64 Maud Worcester Makemson, *op. cit.* p. 3 fn. 5, said that *vale* means "next, later, it passes" and that this word is used to emphasize the completion of a sentence or paragraph. But I think it is the Latin word *vale*, often used in Spanish, meaning "goodbye" - hence, "the end."
- 65 Bernardo de Lizana (1556-1631) in his *Historia de Yucatán: Devocionario de Ntra. Sra. de Izmal*, Museo Nacional, México (1893), p. 4, wrote:

...the ancient fathers, who first implanted the faith of Christ in Yucatán, knew that part of the people here came from the west and part from the east; and thus in their ancient language they named the east in another manner than today. Today, they call the east *LiKin*, which is the same as where the sun rises above us. And the west they call the west *ChiKin*, which is the

same as where (the sun) sets or the end of the sun or where it becomes hidden from us.

And anciently, they called the east *cenial* and the west *nobenial*. *Celnial* is to say the small descent, and *nobenial* the great descent. And it is the case that they say that by the part of the east few people descended on this land and by the (part) of the west many (people)...

Also the *Book of Chilam Balam of Chumayel* frequently refers 10 these two invasions. See Ralph L. Roys', *op. cit.*, pp. 70, 74, 76, 84, I I 5, J 16, 133, 136, 139, 140, 141, 145, 153, 156, 160, 161, 165-166.

66 Ralph L. Roys, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

67 The *Codex Telleriano-Remensis* is in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. It has been published in Alexander von Humboldt, *Vues de Cordilleres et Monuments des peuples indigènes de l'Amérique*, Paris (1816) Edward King (Lord) Kingsborough, *Antiquities of México*, London (1831-1848); Leon de Rosny, *Archives Paleographiques de l'Orient et de l'Amérique*, Paris (1869); E. T. Hamy, *Codex Telleriano Remensis. Manuscrit Mexicain de Cabinet del Arz, M. le Tellier Archeveque de Reims, aujourd'hui a la Bibliothèque National*, Paris (1899); and Joseph-Florimund (Duke of) Loubat, *Codice Vaticano A. Il manoscrito messicano Vaticano No. 3738 detto il Cadice Rios*, Roma (1900).

68 Leon de Rosny, *op. cit.*, p. 201.

69 Adrian Recinos, Delia Goetz, and Sylvanus Morley, translators, *Popul Vuh*, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman (1950) pp. 206-209. Two other English translations are Dennis Tedlock, *Popol Vuh*, Simon and Schuster, New York (1985) and Munro S. Edmonson, *The Book of Council: The Popol Vuh of the Quiché Maya of Guatemala*, Middle American Research Institute. Tulane University, New Orleans (1971). The Spanish translation by Francisco Ximénez is *Las historias del origen de los indios de esta provincia de Guatemala ...*, Libreros de la Academia Imperial de Ciencias, London (1857). Another Spanish translation is Adrian Recinos, *Popul Vuh. Las historias antiguas del Quiché*, México (1974).

70 Hecavitz was a mountain where the migrating Quiché tribes assembled. Probably it was near the Chixoy River, perhaps north of Rabinal in Guatemala.

71 Tamub was a Quiché subtribe.

72 Ilocab was a Quiché subtribe which unsuccessfully rebelled against the Quichés.

73 Dionisio José Chonay and Delia Goetz, translators, *Title of the Lords*

of *Totoncapén*, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman (1953) pp. 176-177.

- 74 Adrian Recinos and Delia Goetz, translators, *The Annals of the Cakchiquets*, University of Oklahoma Press. Norman (1953) pp. 64-65. Daniel G. Brinton's translation in his *Annals of the Cakchiquels*, Library of Aboriginal American Literature, Philadelphia (1885), is different:

They passed over with the sons of Valil and the sons of Tzunun. They went forth from Merac and Nacxit. Truly this one (Nacxit) was a great lord, and the vassals who aided him to seize the sovereignty were themselves rulers and chieftains. He invested Orbaltzam and said that his name should be Cinpuval Taxuch. Truly, he finished by making himself the most dear of all men to all warriors by the words spoken to all by this lord Nacxit:

"You have come to be the stone framework,
the support of my house;
I will give to you sovereignty,
and give you Cinpuval Taxuch."

So said he to all warriors. "I have not placed the stone of the others," so said he to them. And thus they came to erect the stone framework. Therefore, Nacxit completed the appointment of a companion in the sovereignty, and they cried aloud with joy.

- 75 These words show Nahua influence at Nacxit's court. *Cinpal* and *cinpuval* are the Náhuatl words *cempoualli* meaning "twenty" and *taxuch* seems to be derived from the Náhuatl word *xuchitl* signifying "flower."
- 76 Hernando Alvarado Tezozómoc, *Crónica mexicana*, Editorial Leyenda, México (1944), pp. 523-524.
- 77 Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin, *Memorial breve acerca de la fundación de la Calhuacan*, W. Kohlhammer Verlag, Stuttgart (1958), p. 9 *et seq.*
- 78 Francisco de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Cuauhtlehuanitzin, "Segunda relación" and "Tercera relación," in Silvia Rendon, translator, *Relaciones originales de Chalco Amaquemeca ...*, Fondo de Cultura Económica, México (1965), pp. 61-62, 65.
- 79 Bartolomé de las Casas, *Apologética historia de las Indias*, reprinted in Bartolomé de las Casas, *Los indios de México y Nueva España*, Editorial Porrúa, México (1974) p. 53.

- 80 Gerónimo de Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica indiana*, Editorial Chávez Hayhoe, México (1945), vol. I, p. 92.
- 81 The reasons for believing that Kukulcán left Yucatán in a ship, Diego de Landa's comment that Kukulcán "built in the sea a good building like that of Chicheniza, a long stone's throw from the shore" and António de Herrera y Tordesillas' remark that Kukulcán "built a building in the sea," are discussed more fully in Chapter IV.
- 82 Bartolomé de las Casas, *Historia apologética de las indias*, reprinted in Bartolomé de las Casas. *Los indios de México y Nueva España*, Editorial Porrúa, México (1974). p. 53; Gerónimo de Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica indiana*, Editorial Salvador Chávez Hayhoe, México (1945), vol. I, pp. 99.
- 83 Diego de Landa. *Relación de las cosas de Yucatán*, Editorial Porrúa, México (1966), p. 13.
- 84 Diego Muñoz Camargo, *Historia de Tlaxcala*, Oficina Tip. de Secretaria de Fomento, México (1820) and Biblioteca de Facsimile Mexicanos, Edmundo Avina Levy, Guadalajara (1972), p. 41.
- 85 Juan de Torquemada, *Los veinte i un libros rituales i monarquía indiana*, Editorial Porrúa, México (1969), vol. I, pp. 254-255. António de Herrera y Tordesillas in his *Historia general de los hechos de los castellanos, en las islas, y tierra firme de el mar occéano*, Editorial Guaranía, Asunción de Paraguay (1944), vol. IV pp. 108-109 relates the story thus:

After the foundation of México, and of all the land, new peoples came, from toward the north, they landed at Pánuco, they wore long clothes. open in front, without cowls. (with) low-cut collars, short sleeves. and wide. which until this time the natives used in their dances, imitating that nation, which without opposition passed as for as Tula, where they were well received, for it was a people of much industry in whatever art, and in cultivating the land, and thus they were loved by all; and not being able to sustain themselves in Tula, for being very populated, they passed to Cholulan, where they established themselves. and from there they settled in Guaxaca (Oaxaca), and in Mixteca Baxa, and (Mixteca) Alta, and Capotecas: they taught good administration (*mucha policia*) in all the land: and for this (reason), in being some men of prudence, and industry, they called them Tolotecas, for in Tula they commenced to teach; and it is thus, that the Tolotecas are charitable ...

- 86 Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin.

- Memorial breve acerca de la fundación de la ciudad de Culhuacán*, W. Kohlhommer Verlag, Stuttgart (1958), p. 9, Náhuatl text translated into German by Walter Lehmann and Gerdt Kutscher.
- 87 Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin,
- 88 "Origen de los mexicanos" and "Relación de la genealogía ..." in Joaquin García Icazbalceta, *Nueva colección de documentos para la historia de México*, México (1891) and Kraus Reprint, Nendeln. Liechtenstein (1971). pp. 288,266.
- 89 Bartolomé de las Casas, *Historia apologética de las Indias*, reprinted in Bartolomé de las Casas, *Los indios de México y Nueva España*, Editorial Porrúa. México (1974), p. 53; Gerónimo de Mendieta, *loc. cit.*, p. 100.
- 90 Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin, *loc cit*
- 91 *Ibid.*
- 92 Juan de Torquemada, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 255.
- 93 Juan de Torquemada, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 380.
- 94 Gerónimo de Mendieta, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 88-89, 92, 99-100.
- 95 Bartolomé de las Casas, *Historia apologética de las Indias*, reprinted in Bartolomé de las Casas, *Los indios de México y Nueva España*, Editorial Porrúa, México (1974), p. 54.
- 96 Diego Durán, *Historia de las Indias de Nueva España e islas de la tierra firme*, Editorial Porrúa, México (1967). vol. I. p. 14.
- 97 Bernardino de Sahagún, *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España*, Editorial Porrúa, México (1956), vol. I pp. 279-281; Bernardino Sahagún. *Florentine Codex*, University of Utah Press, S.L.C. (1952). pt. IV pp. 15-16, Náhuatl text translated into English by Arthur J.O. Anderson and Charles E. Dibble.
- 98 Juan de Torquemada, *op. cit.* vol. II p. 49.
- 99 Diego Durán, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 14.
- 100 Juan de Torquemada *op. cit.* vol. I p. 255.
- 101 *Codice Chimalpopoca: anales de Cuauhtitlán y leyenda de los soles*, Instituto de Historia, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Imprenta Universitaria. México (1945), p. 10, translated from Náhuatl into Spanish by Primo Feliciano Velázquez. The Náhuatl text and translations into Spanish by Faustino Galicia Chimalpopoca and again by Gumesindo Mendoza and Felipe Sánchez Solís are in "Anales de Cuauhtitlán," *Anales de Museo Nacional*, Imprenta de Ignacio Escalante, México (1885), vol. III. These three Spanish translations of the *Anales de Cuauhtitlán* (1) Primo Feliciano Velázquez, (2) Faustino Galicia Chimalpopoca, and (3) Gumesindo Mendoza and Felipe Sánchez Solís - differ. The Velázquez translation is the most accurate.
- 102 Bernardino de Sahagún, *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva*

España, *op. cit.* in fn. 17, vol. I, pp. 288-291; Bernardino de Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, *op. cit.*, pp. 31-36.

103 Juan de Torquemada, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 49-50.

104 Bernardino de Sahagún, *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España*, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 291; Bernardino de Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, *op. cit.*, p. 35. When Cortés proceeded overland from Tenochtitlán (Mexico City) to Acallan and Honduras in 1525, he had dwarfs and hunchbacks in his retinue. Motecuhzoma kept hunchbacks and dwarfs at his court.

105 Francisco Hernández (the priest in Yucatán), (*Relación*), summarized in Bartolomé de las Casas, *Apologética historia de las Indias*, *Historiadores de Indias*, Nueva Biblioteca de Autores Españoles, Bailly Bailliere e Hijos, Madrid (1909), pp. 328-330. The same text is in Bartolomé de las Casas, *Los indios de México y Nueva España*, Editorial Porrúa, México (1974), pp. 56-57.

106 Francisco López de Gómara, *Historia de la conquista de México*, Editorial Pedro Robredo, México (1943), pp. 198-199.

107 The *Códice Vaticano-Ríos*, also known as the *Códice Ríos* and as the *Codex Vaticanus 3738*, is in the Vatican Library. It appears in Edward King (Lord) Kingsborough, *Antiquities of México*, London (1831-1848), vol. II, Alexander von Humboldt, *Vues des cordilleres, et monuments des peuples indigenes de l'Amerique*, Paris (1816), Joseph Florimund (Duke of) Loubat, *II Manuscripto Messicano Vaticano 3738 detto il Codice Ríos ...* Danesi, Roma (1900), and *Antigüedades de México*, Secretaria de Hacienda y Crédito Público, México (1964), vol. III.

108 Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxóchitl, *Obras Historicas*, Editora Nacional, México (1965), vol. I, p. 21, vol. II, p. 25.

109 Juan de Torquemada, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 254-255.

110 Juan de Torquemada, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 71.

111 Bartolomé de las Casas, *Apologética historia de las Indias*, reprinted in Bartolomé de las Casas, *Los indios de México y Nueva España*, Editorial Porrúa, México (1974), p. 53; Gerónimo de Mendieta, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 99; Juan de Torquemada, *op. cit.*, vol. 11, p. 48.

112 Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxóchitl, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 33.

113 Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxóchitl, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 108.

114 Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxóchitl, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 71, vol. II, p. 31.

115 Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxóchitl, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 46.

116 Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxóchitl, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 66.

117 Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxóchitl, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 101.

118 Diego Durán, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

119. Diego Durán, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-14.

120 Diego Durán, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

121 Bernardino de Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, *op. cit.*, p. 13.,

translated from Náhuatl into English by Arthur J.O. Anderson and Charles E. Dibble.

- 122 Bernardino de Sahagún, *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España*, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 278.
- 123 Juan de Torquemada, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 52.
- 124 Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxóchitl, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 40-41, 56, 71, vol. II, p. 33.
- 125 Bernal Díaz del Castillo, *Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España*, Editorial Porrúa, México (1969), pp. 17, 82, 120, 163.
- 126 *Ibid.*, p. 82.
- 127 *Ibid.*, p. 120.
- 128 *Ibid.*, p. 163.
- 129 Bernardino de Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, *op. cit.*, p. 35, translated from Náhuatl into English by Arthur J. O. Anderson and Charles E. Dibble.
- 130 Bernardino de Sahagún, *Historia de las cosas de Nueva España*, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 291.
- 131 Bernardino de Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, *op. cit.*, pt. IV, p. 14., translated by Arthur J. O. Anderson and Charles E. Dibble.
- 132 Diego Durán, *op. cit.*, vol. p. 13.
- 133 Juan de Tovar, "Relación del origen de los yndios que havitan en esta Nueva España segun sus historias," in Jacques Lafaye, *Manuscrit Tovar*, Akademische Druck - u Verlagsanstalt, Graz (1972) pp. 73-74.
- 134 Bernardino de Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, *op. cit.*, pt. VII, pp. 39-40.
- 135 Francisco Hernández (the physician in México). *Antigüedades de la Nueva España*, Editorial Pedro Robredo, México (1945), p. 169, translated from Latin into Spanish by Joaquín García Pimentel.
- 136 Gerónimo de Mendieta, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 105-107.
- 137 Juan de Torquemada, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 52.
- 138 Bernardino de Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, *op. cit.*, pt. IV. p. 13, translated from Náhuatl into English by Charles E. Dibble and Arthur J. O. Anderson.
- 139 Bernardino de Sahagún, *Historia de las cosas de Nueva España*, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 278.
- 140 Bernardino de Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, *op. cit.*, pt IV. p. 35, translated from Náhuatl into English by Arthur J. O. Anderson and Charles E. Dibble.
- 141 Bernardino de Sahagún, *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España*, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 290.
- 142 Juan de Torquemada, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 255.

- 143 Bartolomé de las Casas, *Historia apologética de las Indias*, reprinted in Bartolomé de las Casas, *Los indios de México y Nueva España*, Editorial Porrúa. México (1974), p. 53; Gerónimo de Mendieta, *op. cit.*, vol. p. 99.
- 144 Diego Durán, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
- 145 Muriel Porter Weaver, *The Aztecas, Maya, and Their Predecessors*, Seminar Press, New York(1972), p. 274; D.M. Pendergast, "Metal Artifacts in Prehispanic America," *American Antiquity*, vol. 27 (1962), pp. 520-545.
- 146 Toribio de Benevente (Motolinia). *Historia de los indios de la Nueva España*. Editorial Porrúa, México (1969), p. 7.
- 147 Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxóchitl, *op. cit.*, vol. p.20, vol. II p 24.
- 148 Sec fn 11.
- 149 Bernardino de Sahagún, Florentine Codex, *op. cit.*, pt. IV p. 13.
- 150 Bernardino de Sahagún, *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España*, *op. cit.*, vol. III, pp. 188-189.
- 151 Bartolomé de las Casas, *Historia apolgética de las Indias*, reprinted in Bartolomé de las Casas, *Las indios de México y Nueva España*, Editorial Porrúa, México (1974), pp. 53-54; Gerónimo de Mendieta, *op. cit.*, pp. 99-100.
- 152 Diego Durán, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 9-14.
- 153 Primo Feliciano Velázquez, translator, *Códice Chimalpopoca: Anales de Cuauhtitlán..* Instituto de Historia, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Imprenta Universitaria, México (1945), p. 8.
- 154 Diego de Landa, *op. cit.*, p. I 3; António de Herrera Y Tordesillas, *Historia general de los hechos de los castellanos, en las islas, y tierra-firme de el mar occéano*, Editorial Guaranía, Asunción de Paraguay (1945), vol. VI, p. 101.
- 155 Francisco Hernández (the priest in Yucatán) *op. cit.*
- 156 Diego de Landa, *op.cit.*, p. 47.
- 157 Diego de Landa, *op. cit.*, pp. 44-47.
- 158 Diego de Durán, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 244-245.
- 159 Josef de Acosta, *Historia natural y moral de las Indias*, Fondo de Cultura Económica, México (1962), pp. 217-179.
- 160 Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxóchitl, *Obras historicas*, Editora Nacional, México (1965), vol. I, pp. 18, 38, 57, 68, 85.
- 161 Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin, *Memorial breve acerca de ... la ciudad de Culhuacán*, U. Kohlhammer Verlag, Stuttgart (1958), pp. 9-10.
- 162 Juan de Torquemada, *Los veinte i un libros rituales i monarquía indiana*, Editorial Porrúa, México (1969), vol. I p.254.
- 163 Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin, *op. cit.*

- 164 Juan de Torquemada, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 254.
- 165 Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin, *op. cit.*
- 166 Primo Feliciano Velazquez, translator, *Códice Chimalpopoca: Anales de Cauhtitlán y leyenda de los soles*, Instituto de Historia, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Imprenta Universitaria, México (1945), p. 7.
- 167 Juan de Torquemada, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 254-256.
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- 171 Diego Durán, *Historia de las Indias de Nueva España e islas de la tierra firme*, Editorial Porrúa, México (1967), vol. I, pp. 9-15, 265, vol. II, pp. 159, 246, 302, 507, 514.
- 172 Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin, *op. cit.*, pp. 13.
- 173 Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin, *op. cit.*, p. 10.
- 174 Bernardino de Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, *op. cit.*, pt. IV, p. 27.
- 175 Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin, *op. cit.*, pp. 12, 36, 127.
- 176 Miguel de Quetzalmazatzin, "Segunda Relación," translated from Náhuatl to Spanish by Silvia Rendon in Francisco de Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Cuauhtlehuanitzin, *Relaciones originales de Chalo Amaquemecan*, Fondo de Cultura Económica, México (1965), p. 62.
- 177 Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin, *op. cit.*, p. 10-11
- 178 Domingo de San Antón Muñón Chimalpahin Quauhtlehuanitzin, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
- 179 Juan de Torquemada, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 256.
- 180 Bernardino de Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, *op. cit.*, pt IV, p. 31, translated from Náhuatl into English by Arthur J. O. Anderson and Charles E. Dibble.
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op. cit., p. 51.
- 186 Ángel Ma. Garilay K., editor and translator, *Poésia náhuatl*, Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, México (1968), vol. III, pp. 1-2. Náhuatl text and Spanish translation.
- 187 Bernardino de Sahagún, *Historia de las cosas de Nueva España*, *op.cit.*, vol III p. 189.
- 188 Juan de Torquemada, vol. I. p. 380.
- 189 António de Solís, *Historia de la conquista de México*, Libreria Europea Paris (1858), p. 198; António de Solís, *Historia de la canquista de México*, Placido Barro López, Madrid (1791), vol. II, p. 117.
- 190 Gerónimo de Mendieta, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 92, 191.
- 191 Miguel de Quezalmazatzin, (1670), *op. cit.*, p. 61.
- 192 Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxóchitl, *op. cit.*, vol. I. pp. 20-21, vol. II p. 24.
- 193 Hernando Alvarado Tezozómoc, *Crónica mexicana*, Editorial Leyenda.. México (1944), p. 514.
- 194 Hernando Alvarado Tezozómoc, *op. cit.*, p. 520.
- 195 Bernardino de Sahagún, *Historia de las cosas de Nueva España*, *op. cit.*, vol. I. p. 291.
- 196 Bernardino de Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, *op. cit.*, pt. IV p. 36, translated from Náhuatl into English by Arthur J O. Anderson and Charles E. Dibble.
- 197 Diego Durán, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 12.
- 198 Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxochitl, *op. cit.*, vol. I. p. 21, vol. II p. 24.
- 199 Fernando de Alva Ixtlilxóchitl, *op. cit.*, vol. I p 20, vol. II p 24.
- 200 Bartolomé de las Casas, *Los indios de México y Nueva España*, Editorial Porrúa, México (1974), p, 54.
- 201 Gerónimo de Mendieta, *op. cit.*, vol. I. p. 100.
- 202 Juan de Torquemada, *Los veinte i un rituales i monarquía indiana*, Editorial Porrúa, México (1966). p. 13.
- 203 Diego de Landa, *Relación de las cosas de Yucatán*, Editorial Porrúa, México (1966), p. 13.
- 204 Diego Durán, *op. cit.*, vol. I. p. 12.
- 205 Diego Durán, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 505.
- 206 Hernando Alvarado Tozozómoc, *op. cit.*, pp. 517-518.
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- 208 Gerónimo de Mendieta, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 92.
- 209 Francisco López de Gómara, *Historia de la conquista de México*, Editorial Pedro Robredo, México (1943), pp. 106, 111.

- 210 Bartolomé de las Casas, *Apologética historia*, in Bartolomé de las Casas, *Los indios de México y Nueva España*, Editorial Porrúa, México (1974), p. 54.
- 211 I have followed Charles E. Dibble and Arthur J. O. Anderson's translation in Bernardino de Sahagún, *Florentine Codex*, University of Utah Press, S.L.C. (1961), pt. XI, pp. 175-176.
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COVER ILLUSTRATION: This carved stone bust has an oval-shaped snake eye carved on the hood and feathers on the back of the neck and a stylised beard. The features of the man are European. Images of snakes and other animals swallowing men are not uncommon in Mexico. The physiognomy suggests the skill of a talented artist. The provenance is central Mexico but is not precisely known.

Credit: National Museum of Mexico

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